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DISQUISITIONS

ON

THE ANTIPAPAL SPIRIT

WHICH PRODUCED

THE REFORMATION;

ITS SECRET INFLUENCE

ON THE LITERATURE OF EUROPE IN GENERAL,
AND OF ITALY IN PARTICULAR.

BY

GABRIELE ROSSETTI,

PROFESSOR OF ITALIAN LITERATURE IN KING'S COLLEGE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN
BY
MISS CAROLINE WARD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. H. F. CARY.

In presenting the following pages to the learned translator of Dante, I cannot conceal from myself how very unlikely it is that I have succeeded in rendering them at all worthy of his acceptance as an English work. This indeed arises not more from my own inadequacy to the task, than from the many difficulties I have had to encounter; for within the range of modern literature, there are perhaps few works which offer so many impediments in the way of a translator as this one on which I have ventured.

In compliance with the expressed wishes of many friends, I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to make it an exclusively English work. The minute researches, however, with which the original abounds, depend so much on expressions, nay, sometimes even on words, which are met with in the Italian classic authors, and which, when transposed into another language, lose much, if not all, of their effect, that in some cases, I have judged it impossible to dispense with the insertion of quotations in the original language.

As a recompense for the disadvantages under which a translation unavoidedly labours, I am enabled to present to your notice a great many important additional proofs, in support of the principal argument, which have never yet been published. For these, which are inserted in different parts of the work, as well as for the whole of the sixth chapter, which was not printed in the original, because the commentary of Dante's anonymous interpreter had not, at the period of its publication, seen the light, I am indebted to the generous courtesy of the author, who, in addition to many acts of kindness which have materially assisted the progress of the work, has permitted me to select from his manuscripts any thing which I might consider likely to increase the value of the present translation.

If some critics, whose opinions differ from those of the author have been unnecessarily violent in their manifestations of dissent, there are, at least as many who, struck by the force of concurring evidences, consider him entitled to the honour of having discovered secrets, which for ages, were buried in the mystic pages of his country's brightest ornaments. Without venturing to pronounce any decided opinion on the merits of a subject at once so difficult and so important, I lay this work before the tribunal of English opinion; and where can either author or translator hope to obtain a more impartial judgment?

You will perceive, that wherever the Divine Comedy is quoted, I have not scrupled to avail myself of your permission to make use of your translation, without which I feel that my undertaking would have been a hopeless one. My obligations on that score being too numerous for repetition, I must here content myself with one general acknowledgment of them, and conclude with sincere regret that, the task of introducing a work of so much interest to the English public has not devolved on one of more talent and experience, and that these pages so little merit the honour of being accepted by the high literary authority to whom they are now respectfully dedicated by

THE TRANSLATOR.

Bedford Square,
June 23, 1834.

PROPERTY OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

TO

CHARLES LYELL, Esq.

Sir,

Our common affection for the literature of Italy first united us in the bonds of a mutual friendship; the same feeling has since strengthened that friendship; and I am now at liberty to proclaim my sentiments to the world, by presenting to you the fruits of the researches to which I was tempted by my own inclination, and encouraged by your kindness.

I have wandered through the vast field of my country's literature, and have explored the many gardens which adorn it. I saw that they were redolent, not only of flowers delightful to the eye, but of sweet and nutritious fruits. I discovered that treasures beyond all price were buried under the enchanted ground whereon I was treading, and I beheld the muses there, presiding over all that is most recondite in philosophy, mysterious in politics, and inaccessible in mystic theology. Ardently did I pursue the paths of those jealous guardians, and when at last I succeeded in gaining possession of their sacred deposit, I considered that the conquest was to be ascribed as well to your valued advice as to my own constant labour.

To you therefore, I offer the jewels I have newly set; they are yours by right; and you will take the place of the muses, and guard them as carefully.

If your approval taught me to value them, while they were yet unpolished, much more precious will they be in my eyes now that I have succeeded in arranging, and displaying them in a favourable light. No other merit can I claim, than that of drawing them from obscurity, and using my best endeavour to unite them by a connecting link, while you were giving me courage to prosecute my researches by shewing me their intrinsic worth.

The kindness with which you accepted my first abridged essay, deprives me of all fear for the fate of the present volume, whose value is doubly enhanced by the introduction of a name so known and respected as yours.

Should the importance of the subject attract the world's attention, and that name be associated with mine, through countries and times far remote from us, my want of talent will soon be discovered, and in lieu of that, I can only plead a hearty desire to render the offering I now make as little unworthy of your acceptance as possible.

You have been a witness of my labours; I now entreat the exercise of that clearness of judgment and sincerity of heart, which must be equally valuable to me, whether you approve or condemn.

And in the mean while, accept this public testimony of homage and respect, dictated by the private feelings of him who is proud to call himself

Your most obliged servant,
And respectful friend,
GABRIELE ROSSETTI.

PREFACE.

I AM aware that the arrangement of the following work will be censured by many as faulty; and, whatever may be its merits, such undoubtedly is, in some degree, the case; but, while I candidly confess this, I justify myself by pointing out the causes which have produced it.

The first defect which will be noticed is, the multitude of quotations and authorities with which almost every page is interspersed. I have brought forward these numerous testimonials, because I foresaw that some of my fundamental arguments would be received with suspicion by many of my readers; and, as they form the very basis of my literary edifice, I was under the necessity of calling a great number of witnesses to their support.

The second fault I have committed is that of repeating the same things in different parts of the volume. This trespass of excess, which has arisen from the first, is in itself a vice in composition, but the nature of my subject has rendered it almost unavoidable. My desire to convince my readers that the opinions I have advanced, although at first sight they may appear the dreams of a diseased mind, are in reality true and unquestionable, has led me, perhaps, to be too immoderate in my use of documents and authorities (although I might have greatly multiplied them); but every fresh confirmation of the same truth is, as it were, a new truth, because each corroborating proof shows the question in a different light.

Some will charge me with a third fault, diametrically opposite to the preceding ones, viz. a parsimony of reasons, rather than a superfluity, because, in many places, I have made assertions which I have left for a subsequent argument to confirm. This has been done with the view of carrying on the course of my observations, uninterrupted by the insertion of proofs which are afterwards fully established. The reader will do me no more than justice, therefore, by suspending his final decision until he sees whether the promises I hold out of a satisfactory conclusion to all my theories, be or be not fulfilled.

I shall be accused of a fourth error in having intermixed passages from various languages, Latin, English and French, with an Italian disquisition. The same desire I before expressed, of strengthening my facts with unquestionable evidence, has induced me to prefer quoting the words in the language in which they were originally written, in order that no suspicion of any alteration in their meaning may be imputed to me; and my readers will not quarrel with me for supposing them learned enough to draw the truth from its genuine sources. To this may be added the impossibility of translating those passages literally, much of whose force consists in the disposition and sound of the words; their value in another language would be either weakened or destroyed. When, however, I could convey their sense by an Italian version, I have done so, putting the original (when the passage is of importance) into a note.

The fifth fault will probably be called a literary insubordination. It is true that my opinion differs essentially from the commonly received one concerning the celebrated works of antiquity; but those who prefer the judgment, which is the result of examination, to that which is founded on the opinion of others, will compensate me by their approval. Either the results of my analysis will be unanswerable, or they will meet with a complete refutation; — in the first case, I shall have corrected mistaken opinions; in the last, I shall be myself set right; and I shall welcome conviction most gladly.

The sixth defect has arisen entirely from the nature of my subject. So various and complicated were the ideas to be explained, and the proofs to be collected, that at one time I almost despaired of being able to trace convincingly with my pen all that my mind felt so clearly. It is because I saw the whole extent of the difficulty, that I have studied how best to arrange the contents of the work. I would fain have dispensed altogether with notes, or finding that impossible, I would at least have inserted but a very small number; but I found that the subject imperiously required a great many. In order, therefore, to interrupt, as little as possible, the course of ideas, I have divided them into two classes; those which are more nearly connected with the text, are placed at the bottom of the page; the others, which form a sort of appendix to them, will be found at the end of the volume; and to these the reader will find a reference in the part of the argument to which they relate.

I should do my work an injustice, were I to say that I consider its merits effaced by these spots on its surface. They have fallen there from necessity; but they will not, I trust, be found to cover it entirely.

The freedom with which I have spoken of the Church of Rome, and her bishops, will be looked upon as an offence by many; and, by a few, as a fault which outweighs all the others. But those, who are not carried away too far by their zeal, must acquit me, if they but reflect on the impossibility of examining an argument, like the one I have chosen, without full liberty of speech. I feel no irreverence towards the Catholic church—far from it—I wish to respect her; nevertheless, I have been frequently obliged, in order to show the strength of her enemies' arguments, to put myself in their place, and adopt their spirit and language. Had I not done this, I must have curtailed the evidence here produced, to the great detriment of the work, and exposed myself, by not fully proving my allegations, to the risk of being called a bold assertor and malignant calumniator, by those very persons to whom I should have wished to spare the mortification of hearing the crimes which were ascribed to them.

By bringing to light the exaggerated opinions and audacious attempts, against which the Latin church had to struggle, I justify, in some degree, the extreme rigour to which she was urged. One alternative alone was left to her; to yield, or to attack; and she chose the last as her remedy;—a remedy, alas! which aggravated the disease. To preserve her power, she became cruel; and lost it, precisely, because she was so. That power was derived from her character; and the means taken to increase the one, ruined the other.

I have entered into no discussions on points of doctrine; and when I speak of them at all, it is not with any intention of arguing on the real failings of him who is supposed to be infallible, but on those which were imputed to him, either by friends or foes. The light, in which I shall present their opinions, will show the extent of the secret forces which, preparatory to its mighty fall, had long encompassed the tower on which stood the gigantic colossus of the Papal power, resting in fancied security over a mine; and, while exhibiting the effects of the sharpest weapon which ever attacked it, I have been compelled to cast aside every consideration which would have lessened the belief of its power.

My subject will furnish many a useful lesson to those who govern, warning them of the necessity of valuing public opinion. When crushed by armed violence, it may be mute for a time; but its silence is eloquent and awful! It watches with closed eyelids; it labours in its repose; and its course will never be arrested until, the favourable moment being arrived, it overthrows every obstacle opposed to it, and leaps to the desired goal

When once acquainted with the secret causes which prepared the way for that great event which deprived the Roman shepherd of the half of his flock, we shall see that the ruler who, forgetful of his true interest, instead of stretching out his hand to sorrowful children, prefers trampling upon murmuring slaves, may obtain a temporary triumph; but he will entail upon his successors a long train of misfortunes, from which they will seek to extricate themselves in vain.

He who reads the future in the past, when he sees that the satellites of St. Dominic, and the myrmidons of St. Ignatius, and the bloodthirsty army of Inquisitors, who were hired to be the destroyers of the faithful, and the brothers who rose up against their brothers, goaded on by him who was called their common Father; and the dreadful days of Toulouse and St. Bartholomew, and the dungeons and racks, the axes, and funeral piles; that all *these* were the producing causes of that change of things which took from Rome so much, and left her so little; he will perceive clearly that the same effects must always be produced by similar causes.

The following disquisitions will place before our eyes a clear mirror. For several ages, the dust of time and the veil of mystery have hung over it, and concealed secrets of the last importance from the world; which has beheld their effects without being able to trace their origin. The hand of History and Criticism will lift the veil, and scatter the dust; and the mirror will then, like a magic-lantern, show us, in the successive scenes of a new revelation, the solution of all the most difficult and important problems that the political, religious, historical, and literary works of any European country can offer for the consideration of mankind.

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INTRODUCTION.

The abuse of power in any ruler is odious; but, in the minister of the sanctuary, it becomes also scandalous and fatal in its consequences. When he forfeits the respect of mankind, religion is the sufferer; when he becomes an oppressor, God is dishonoured. If religion be still held sacred, the unrighteous priest will be known to be false to it; and the very zeal with which the one is followed will redound to the disgrace of the other: and having lost the good opinion of mankind, what substitute can he find for it? Not force; for that being another violation of the law of peace over which he should preside, would but tend to widen the breach, and woe to any cause when persuasion is rejected for violence! The one *may* win back, but the other is sure to be resented on the first opportunity. And so it was with regard to the corrupted and armed papacy:—Christians detested its vices; but they dreaded its power. They worshipped Christ, while they considered him who styled himself his vicar, and acted not as such, as his worst adversary.

It would be a superfluous task to recall the many disorders introduced by unworthy shepherds into Christ's flock; the vices with which they were stained, the changes in the true doctrine which were imputed to them; the cruelties they exercised towards those who remonstrated against them, and the many victims they sacrificed to their ambition.—All these are historical truths which are sanctified by the indignation of thousands of eloquent volumes; truths which the Romish writers themselves could not wholly deny, and dared not always excuse; and which we willingly pass over, our design being to consider their effects.

In order to show that the acts of the Reformers, at the beginning of the 16th century, were the fruits of the opinions of preceding ages; that the spirit of protestantism descended from generation to generation, down to those who at last boldly preached it to the world, and that the Christian Church was divided, while it appeared still entire, we shall bring before our readers the words of many of those who raised their voices from time to time, and spoke a language which gave a new impulse to their posterity.

Awe-struck and stupified, the world was the spectator of the abominations of which Rome was the centre; and from the year 1000 of the Christian era, the words of the Revelations were thought of with terror: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations." (c. 20. v. 7, 8.) Every eye was turned towards that hotbed of vice, to seek there the unchained Satan. The passage in c. 18. v. 2.: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit," was applied to those who surrounded the earthly Satan like so many infernal spirits. And again, in c. 17, "the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads.—The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." All these passages seemed to point out minutely the city of the seven hills, Rome, (who celebrated on the solemn festival of the *Septimontium* her own topography) as the abode of that infamy, and of that dominion which even monarchs dreaded. The words in c. 17, v. 6. "and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," were in very early times applied to the repeated and merciless punishments inflicted by Rome on those who dared to lift up the voice of complaint or indignation. The passage in c. 13. v. 18. "Let him that hath understanding, count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six," was interpreted by Greek letters (for the Revelation was written in Greek.) LATEINOS, latin man; which name gave exactly the number 666; and hence it was firmly believed that the beast of the Apocalypse called by St. John *the false prophet*, was the same who was known as the head of the Latin Church.*

The whole book, from which we have here quoted a few passages, was fatal to Rome. That single apostolical writing gave more disquiet to the Popes than all the Protestant works ever written; and improbable as it may appear, they seemed to take delight in doing every thing most likely to turn the hearts of the faithful to receive these opinions; as though they desired to be recognised as those depraved characters, so plainly declared by our Lord's apostles to be the delegates and the image of Lucifer. St. Paul wrote that that false prophet, that man of sin, who was to come through the working of Satan, would sit in God's temple with all the power of signs and miracles,† and the Pope seating himself in the temple of God, filled it with numberless workers of signs and miracles, whose deeds even now, swell the pages of the *Flos Sanctorum*. St. Paul wrote that the messenger of Satan would forbid marriage; and the Pope condemned to celibacy the whole body of priests, friars and nuns. St. Paul wrote that the agent of Satan would command abstinence from meat; and the Pope introduced the observance of lent, vigils, and ember weeks. St. Paul says that we should exercise ourselves unto godliness, for bodily exercise profiteth little; and the Pope ordered penances, fasts, and discipline.* St. Paul recommends us above all things to abide by the doctrine and words of our Saviour, and to withdraw from those who dispute perversely; and the Pope encouraged the controversies of schoolmen, who made theology a field of thorns and thistles. St. Paul says that confession should be public, and the Pope made it private. St. Paul, faithful to the precepts and practice of his divine Master, warns us that those who seek riches fall into the snares of the devil, and err from the faith; and the Pope dwelt in splendid palaces, and abounded in wealth raised from the sale of indulgences, bulls and dispensations.† St. Peter also wrote that there would be false teachers among us, who would live luxuriously, and make merchandise of us through covetousness, with feigned words, &c.,‡ and the Popes, who could not be ignorant of these predictions, who read them every day, who heard how distinct and characteristic they were,—courted, by their own deeds, the application of them, at the very time that they were loudly proclaiming themselves the successors of the Apostles who had written them. Let us pity those then, who, deceived by the singular coincidence of these prophecies, believed that they had discovered their true objects.

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* The interpretation of *Lateinos*, which gives the number 666, is very ancient. See it in St. Irenæus, b. 5. c. 30. St. Jerome, St. Augustine, Tertullian, and many other ancient fathers of the church, understood Rome to be the Babylon of the Revelations.

† 2d. Epis. Thessal. ch. 2.

From that time, the Pope was constantly called by ecclesiastics even more frequently than by others, Satan and Antichrist; his ministers were styled demons and sons of perdition, and their city Hell and Babylon; and these names are understood to this day by many Protestants to bear the same signification. Let us produce a few examples, as they follow in successive ages.

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* 1st Timothy, ch. 4. † 1st Timothy, ch. 6. ‡ 2d Peter, ch. 2.

CHAPTER I.

OPEN LANGUAGE AGAINST ROME.

Even before the year 1000, Claudius, Archbishop of Turin, who was celebrated for the purity of his life and doctrine, though censured by some members of the church for his writings against the Pope, wrote: "No wonder that the members of *Satan* speak of me thus."[*]

Of the Pope Hildebrand (Gregory VII.), who lived at the end of the prophesied thousand years, we read: "The raging *Satan* has been unchained, that the mighty arm of the Lord may destroy him, that is, the Pope Hildebrand."[†]

Lambert, the Monk of Aschaffenburg, writing of the same Pope, says: "*Satan* has broken forth from prison, and lays waste the Church."[‡]

A little later, the English Carmelite, William Dysse, who was celebrated for his preaching in France, Spain, &c., indignant at the vices of the heads of the church exclaimed: —

> "O how worse than useless are the modern priests!
> Rather may they be called priests of Hell!"[§]

Arnulph, Bishop of Orleans, thus addressed the Council of Rheims, pointing to the Roman Pontiff: "Who is that seated upon a high throne, and radiant with purple and gold? I say, whom do you take him to be? Verily, if he thus follows uncharitableness, and is puffed up with his own learning, it must be *Antichrist*, sitting in the temple of God." *

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[*] Apologeticum rescriptum Claudii Epis. See J. Léger. Hist. Gen. des Eglises Evang. Part I. page 188. Leyden, 1669.

[†] Concilia, &c. Cologne, 1551. vol. ii. page 814.

[‡] Hist. of Germ. of the year 1076.

[§] Lez. sopra il decameron. Bottari, at the beginning.

Heu, quantum nugatorii Præsules moderni,
Dici debent potius Præsides Averni!

And in the Council of Ratisbon, which was held much later, Everard, Bishop of Saltzburg, exclaimed: "He who is the servant of servants, desires to be lord of lords: he profanes, he pillages, he defrauds, he robs, he murders, and he is the lost man who is called *Antichrist*." † The last words prove that the name was habitually applied to the Pope.

In the General History of the Church of the Valdenses, published by their minister, Jean Léger, many very ancient protestant manuscripts are brought to light, which were deposited for safety in the University of Cambridge, in the time of Oliver Cromwell. We take a few extracts from one of them only, which bears the date of 1120: "What are the works of Antichrist? To take away the truth, and change it into falsehood; to practise insatiable avarice, and simony; to govern, not by the Holy Spirit, but by secular power; to hate, persecute, murder, rob, and torture Christ's followers. He has brought forward various decrees, both ancient and modern, with the design of obtaining money by them. — The Apostle says: 'What communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial?'—I will not that ye make yourselves companions of demons.— We will separate ourselves wholly from him whom we believe to be Antichrist." ‡

When the spirit of reform manifested itself among the Albigenses, thousands of whom were sacrificed by the Popes, the indignant Muse of the Provençal troubadours hurled many an invective against Rome. One example will suffice, which was written in the thirteenth century, during the heat of the struggle between the Empire and the Priesthood, that is, between Frederick II. and three consecutive Popes. "Immoral, faithless city, Rome, thy seat is fixed in the depths of hell and perdition. Without reason, thou hast destroyed a whole people.—Thou despisest God and the saints—falsehood and infamy dwell in thy bosom." And then he turns to the cause of all this evil, and exclaims: "Outwardly thou art a lamb, but inwardly, a devouring wolf, and a crowned serpent.* Go, Sirvente, and tell the false priest, that he who submitteth to his dominion, is *dead.*" Guillen Figueiras.†

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* Baronius, vol. x.

† Aventino. Annal. B. VII.

‡ Part I. page 74, &c.

But we will dwell no longer on the authority of men little known, whom we might, were it necessary, cite in myriads against Rome, but pass on to those who hold the chief rank in this undaunted band: at the head of them appears the greatest literary character of the following century, Petrarch, the celebrated contemporary of Dante. He is worthy of entire belief, not only from the acknowledged integrity of his character, but from his intimate acquaintance with the papal court, where he resided for some time; and we shall be excused for dwelling at some length on his testimony, because his confidential intercourse with the greatest princes and most learned men of his time, his frequent journeys to France, and more distant lands, and his extensive correspondence, which brought him into contact with various men and countries, render his words almost an epitome of the spirit of the age. And those who know him only as the tender and impassioned poet, will forgive us in the pleasure of meeting him again in the character of a powerful and eloquent orator.

We will not call poetry in evidence, because there generally rests on it a suspicion of exaggeration; therefore we pass over those well-known sonnets, which were interdicted at Rome, in which he calls that city "a school of error, a temple of heresy; once Rome, now Babylon, the false and wicked—hell of the living:" and we turn to his prose writings, wherein we shall read his real sentiments, and particularly to his familiar epistles, in which he opened his heart to his friends without reserve.* The only difficulty is in selecting from such abundant materials. Petrarch left seventeen volumes, which contain nearly three hundred letters; and we must here confine ourselves to some detached passages, selected from the contents of a single volume, entitled *Epistolarum sine titulo liber;* and from them we shall learn his abhorrence of what he called Hell and the congregation of devils, and his grief for the persecutions of those persons who were treated as heretics, but whom he called true followers of Christ, and we shall leave the reader to judge whether or not he was of their number. He writes from Avignon, then the papal see, to a confidential friend, thus:—

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* "That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan,—having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Rev. ch. 12.

† Millot, Hist. Litt. des Troubadours.

"The sun never shone on a more shameless city than this western Babylon, where I am now dwelling: its river, the proud Rhone, is like the burning Cocytus or Acheron, and here reigns a proud race of *fishermen*, who are no longer poor. In the name of Jesus, but with the works of Belial, they imprison numbers of unhappy Christians, and then, after pillaging them of every thing, they condemn them to the flames." (Epis. 4.) "Woe to thy people, Christ Jesus, woe to thy people, Lord! Fountain of all mercies, suffer us to pour out our sorrows unto thee, for as our woes are great, so do our hearts cling to thee more fondly. Give not our souls, we implore thee, as a prey to the devouring beasts. Thou hast sorely tried thy people, like as silver is tried; we have passed through the flame &c.; we trusted in thee, who rulest over the waters, to still the fury of the waves, which destroyed the first fisherman; and we hoped that thou wouldst have calmed them when his bark descended to another:* we trusted that these proud ones would have been humbled, and that thine arm would have overthrown thine enemies, for they are no longer lambs, but wolves; no longer fishermen, but pirates; no longer shepherds, but butchers; but their pride increases now more and more." (Epis. 10) "This ecclesiastical Dionysius oppresses and spoils our Syracuse—his delight is in others' woes; fishing in troubled waters, thieving in darkness." (Epis. 11) "O, Christ! thou who art all-powerful, hear our miseries, and put an end to this struggle, for our yoke is intolerably heavy. We are fervent and zealous, O Saviour, in thy service." (Epis. 15.)

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* "In his Epistles, Petrarch describes himself, and every secret of his heart, with wonderful candour." Baldelli. Life of Petr. "It is there we must seek for the soul of Petrarch." Ginguené Hist. Lit. d'Italiè. In De Sade's memoirs of the poet, we find the same thing repeated.

In another letter, he dissuades a friend from going to that infernal city, and conjures him rather to visit any other part of the world. "Go where thou wilt, even among the Indians, but come not to Babylon, descend not, while living, into Hell. — No light is here, but all is confusion, darkness, and perplexity; (and to use the words of Lucan,) a night of intense wickedness; yes, a night of clouds and darkness, unspeakable misery, infinite anguish, and distress that has no end." (Epis. 12)

Horrified with the wickedness he saw, he escaped from Avignon, fearing probably that he might share in the works of Satan, and afterwards writing to a friend who still remained there, he urged him to fly directly from the tabernacle of the devil, if he would not be damned for ever. "The Rhone surpasses Cocytus and Acheron, the rivers of hell. All that has been ever heard or read of perfidy, deceit, pride, and unbridled licentiousness; all that earth ever contained, in its different regions of impiety and immorality, is gathered and concentrated there. And if thou still lovest Christ, piety will give thee strength to fly from the sight of the enormities of his enemies. For thou art living in the midst of a people who have rebelled against him, who were ranged under his banners, and are fighting the battles of Satan; in a word, a people impious, proud, greedy, and vain; with a heart of iron, a breast of steel, a will of lead, but soft of speech; a people who follow the example of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his master with a kiss, saying, 'Hail, Master!' and of those Jews who clothed their Lord in purple, and crowned him with thorns, and then smote him, and spat upon him, and bowed the knee before him in bitter mockery, crying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And what else do those enemies of Christ continually?" (Epis. 15.)

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* From this, and many other passages, we clearly collect that Petrarch considered that the Apostolical succession had passed to the persecuted, and not to their persecutors, whom he calls Satan, demons, &c. &c.

In another, addressed to the same friend, he endeavours to persuade him to abjure for ever that "School of error," &c., undertaking to prove by argument, that the papal court was really the Babylon of the Revelations. "Would'st thou know the ineffable beauty of God? Try to measure the wickedness of his enemies: thou hast not to seek them afar off, they dwell in Babylon." And then he goes on to enumerate such monstrous heresies, such abominable practices, and crimes so excessive, that we are tempted to hope that he saw things with too prejudiced an eye.

"Rejoice, O enemy of all goodness, handmaid of impiety, asylum of the wicked! Rejoice, O vilest of all things—infamous Babylon, thou who art leagued in iniquity with the kings of the earth! Thou art the very same which the Evangelist saw in the spirit; the very same, and none other, that sitteth on many waters—thou sittest in thy pride and folly, forgetful of the power of the Almighty. The waters are the people and the nations over whom thou hast dominion. 'And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations,' &c. &c. (Rev. c. 17. v. 4.) O Babylon, dost thou know thyself? To whom do the next passages apply, if not to thee, O mother of all the abominations of the earth, infamous parent of infamous children? 'And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' Still silent! Show me another, drunken with that blood, or confess that thou art she. The words of the Evangelist are true; and if he who saw thee in the spirit, wondered with great admiration, how much greater must be our wonder, who see thee with our own eyes? What reward dost thou expect for all these abominations, of which the kings and nations of the earth have drunk? St. John says: 'The great Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils:' and so art thou, for in what respect is a wicked and desperate man better than a devil? Yes, thou art not only the habitation, but the kingdom of devils, who, under a human form, but with all their art, reign in thee. And thou, my friend, listen to the words which the Apostle heard from heaven: 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen: therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." (Rev. c. 18.) Hear then and depart, lest thy innocence be confounded with her iniquities, which are without beginning or end, and which no man can measure or weigh. I say nothing of the heresy of Simon Magus, which is there imitated; nor of the crimes of those who sell the gifts of the Holy Spirit; nor of their avarice, called by the Apostle the worship of idols; nor of their cruelty," &c. &c. (Epis. 16.)

Persuaded by the arguments of Petrarch, his friend fled from the court, and, as we may reasonably presume, from the doctrine of Satan, and doubtless, he had the best opportunity of seeing with his own eyes, whether these vivid descriptions of crimes which the pen refuses to transcribe were exaggerated or not. Petrarch, happy that he had been the means of saving his soul, exultingly exclaimed, "Thou hast fled, thou hast escaped, and my heart is glad. I feared, yes, I confess that I feared for thy soul. I thought that having once descended into the infernal regions, thou wouldst not have had strength or power to escape thence. I feared, because I know that the path which leads to them is easy, but that the ascent is slippery and painful. I said in mine heart, O, will my Alcides, will my Theseus, ever return in safety from that Hell! Thou hast returned; thanks be to God who releases the souls of those who trust in him. Remember, and nevermore see the face of that Minos, that judge of hell—nevermore let thy will lead thee into the presence of the princes of darkness; but may the God of gods confound them for ever in their wickedness, for they are stained with the blood of the holy Lamb, and are rebellious and stubborn against his word." He then gives us to understand that a high personage, probably the Cardinal Colonna, had recalled him to the papal court, but he adds: "He urges me with well-meant but foolish kindness, to return to live and die in Babylon. And wherefore? To see the good humbled, and the wicked exalted; eagles creeping, and asses flying; foxes in gilded coaches, crows on high towers, doves on dunghills, wolves unchained, lambs fettered, Christ forgotten, Antichrist supreme, and Beelzebub the judge?" (Ep. 17.)

It is quite evident that these opinions, uttered in the confidence of friendship to several persons, and never swerved from, must have been the fruits of conviction. And even those sentiments which, at first sight, appear exaggerated figures of language, we must understand from

Petrarch literally. We shall see that they are derived from the sacred doctrines professed by the Protestant Church, then oppressed and followed in secret, now triumphant and openly proclaimed. Petrarch entertained these opinions in common with many, whom he called true followers of Christ, persecuted by Antichrist and Satan. The disinterested feelings which induced him, at an advanced age, to refuse high places and dignities, which the Pope offered him through Cardinal Talleyrand, are a convincing proof of his sincerity.

We would fain dwell much longer on Petrarch's testimony, but we must now leave him, and cast a hurried glance over the uniformity of the like sentiments in illustrious men of other countries, in that same century.

To prove that the expressions already cited, are not to be ascribed to mere vehemence of language, but to the firmness of belief, we will produce examples from dogmatic books, which were written contemporaneously with the last works of Petrarch; and consider some of those multifarious opinions, which were afterwards solemnly condemned by the council of Constance, and which flowed abundantly from the inexhaustible pen of Wickliffe, the professor of the University of Oxford; and they will show the bond of fellowship which existed between the Italian poet and the English theologian.

"The Popes and Cardinals were not ordained by God, but introduced by the devil.—If the Pope belong to any order, it is to the devil's.—The cardinals are beyond all doubt, incarnate devils.*—The Pope is the Antichrist mentioned in the sacred pages, the lawyer specially appointed by the devil, † who strives to renew every year the treason against Christ.* The Pope put the shackles of infidelity round the feet of Christians; and those shackles are private auricular confessions, for which there is no foundation in the law. Private confession to the priest was introduced by Pope Innocent III. From the beginning of the tenth century down to this day, the consecrated host has been converted into a heresy, viz., when it was introduced by the devil. The confirmation of the bishops, solemnized with so many rites, was introduced by the devil. False and lying censures are not founded on the law of Christ, but were fraudulently devised by Antichrist. Mankind, especially in Europe, follow that blind heresy, which teaches that the whole church militant is under the governance of Antichrist. No imperial Pope (that is, with the power of a secular Prince,) was ever established by Christ's ordination, but introduced into the church by the malice of the devil. Princes and powers ought mutually to aid each other, in order that no such Pope may exist, and they should never assist such a Pope either with money or works. What does that law signify, *Omnis utriusque sexus*, except a submission to this devil, the Pope? And the same, with other similar laws of Lucifer. God will not permit that cankerworm who calls himself Pope, any longer to infest the church; he has made it a mass of corruption in his diabolical abode. The Pope assumes to have the power of excommunicating; which power he has no more right to than the devil has a right to curse a Christian people. The masked demons are powerless against the children of light, for they are devils and the children of devils."†

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* These are the *Princes of the Earth*, the *Princes of the World*, to whom Dante wrote his letter on the death of Beatrice, which begins "How doth the city sit solitary."

† The *procurator of infernal wickedness*, he was called by Bartolo, Wickliffe's contemporary.

Numerous were the followers of Wickliffe in England; nobles and people, learned and ignorant; and the alarming rebellion which broke out in 1379 and 1380, while he was still living, is by historians generally attributed to the powerful effects of his writings and preaching. Nor were they of less consequence out of England. John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, pursued the doctrines inculcated in his works; and their followers, to the number of 40,000 armed sectarians, made the Latin church pay most dearly for the death of their two chiefs, so remorselessly given to the flames.

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* *The treason against Christ* gave Dante the idea of putting Judas into the centre mouth of that immense colossus, of whom he wrote, *the Pope is Satan*. "Then entered *Judas* into *Satan*.

† See these and others of Wickliffe's opinions, condemned by the Council of Constance in the *Fasciculus Rerum Expetendarum et Fugiendarum* of E. Brown, p. 266, &c. London, 1690.

In the next century, we find materials to fill a volume; but as the Roman tribunal itself lets us know in what estimation it was held, we shall prefer its evidence to that of another.

Albert of Capitaneis, appointed by Innocent VIII. to examine heretics, wrote in the ninth article of his report: "These men have believed, and continue to believe, that the Roman Church is the house of confusion, the Babylon of the Revelation, the synagogue of the devil; and this is public, notorious, true, and manifest." Now being all this, by the acknowledgment of the papal inquisitors themselves, it would be a loss of time, were we to bring forward the volumes of evidence on their adversaries' side: and we therefore pass on to the next century, which was still more fertile in disputes.

In the sixteenth century, the ardent spirit of reform burst forth in one simultaneous blaze throughout Europe; and men without number, nay, whole provinces and kingdoms, threw off the mask of popery, and declared their true sentiments. Some among the protestant doctors, a little inclined to the marvellous, have persuaded themselves, and tried to persuade others, that Providence specially interposed, so that, in countries far distant from each other, men inspired by divine grace, abjured at the same moment, their ancient belief. But we hope to show more fully than we have yet done, that preceding ages had kindled and secretly fed the fire, which at last broke out with the might of a volcano. All the most profound critics and historians agree, that the reformers of the sixteenth century only set the match to the train, which their predecessors had, by slow degrees, and from time to time, laid in the mine. Luther, for instance, in his work on the Captivity of Babylon, taught nothing new when he called Rome *Babylon*, and the Pope, *Antichrist*, the devouring wolf, the beast of the Apocalypse, vomiting devils, the messenger of Satan on earth, and similar names. He merely found himself enabled, by circumstances, to publish with impunity, what before his time was only whispered tremblingly. The worship of images, the prayers for the dead, the celibacy of the clergy, the sacrifice of the mass, indulgences, fasts, &c. &c.; all these had been previously abolished by the Valdenses, the Albigenses, and other sects. In short, we know that the practices of the Reformed Church had existed from a remote period, although only then proclaimed solemnly. The Popes, who persecuted the primitive reformers so remorselessly, never foresaw how powerful their successors would one day become: had they done so, instead of shedding rivers of blood, and disgusting the world by their conduct,—instead of making their own devotees adversaries, their first care would have been to correct the most crying abuses, and by thus reconciling the souls of men to their dominion, they would have strengthened that dominion on the foundations of piety. But it appears destined that every reform should have its martyrs, and those who begin the great work are generally the lamented victims; posterity does them justice, while the memory of their oppressors is execrated. But is it equally destined that those oppressors should learn nothing from the sad school of experience?

Now while the reformation was spreading throughout Germany, what was passing in Italy? In spite of the formidable presence of the supposed Satan, who, maddened with fear and rage, caused the funeral pile to be lighted, and the axe to be sharpened, many an Italian voice was heard to echo the words of that Luther, whose thunders already shook the Vatican. O! how many flattered themselves with the hope that they should live to see the fall of the towers on the seven hills of Babylon! The seed which had been sown in secret by so many illustrious men, (and we shall bring proofs of their exertions) and increased and fertilized from age to age, now began to bring forth the promised fruit. Reformed Churches sprang up in several parts of the Peninsula, and cities and villages declared their adherence to the new faith. To quench this fervent and increasing zeal, blood was profusely shed; and there were days when (to use one of their own expressions,) hundreds of innocent lambs fell at the foot of the altar of the infernal deity. Those who desire to be more fully acquainted with the atrocities perpetrated at that time in Italy, would do well to read the affecting narrative lately published by Dr. M'Crie. (Hist. of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Italy.)

In this disturbed state of things, many works were written by Italians on the same melancholy subject, among which are those of Francesco Negri of Bassano, who, having sought safety in flight, published several anti-papal works in his exile, and particularly a Latin tragedy, called *Liberum Arbitrium* (1546), from which we need only transcribe four lines:

Long had the Pope proclaimed himself to the world
Half man, half God;
Now by God's blessing we are enabled to see him
Half man, half Satan.* Act III. Sc. 4.

James Acontius, of Trent, a philosopher, theologian, and jurisconsult, being persecuted for his opinions in Italy, withdrew to England, where he was kindly received; and where he lived until his death, which happened in 1566. He composed and published, in that country, his Latin work, intituled, "The Stratagems of Satan." In the frontispiece, was engraven the figure of the Romish Church, with a wolf at her feet; sitting amidst the vices, which are personified, and cloaked with virtues. From the beginning to the end of the work, we are given to understand, that the Satan whose stratagems he exposes, was the very same who forced him to leave his country.* In Book the 2nd, where he unveils all the intrigues of Rome with the European princes, the nature of all her institutions, and the practices of the inquisition, the author, after a long enumeration of them, exclaims:—"It is wonderful to see the art with which Satan trains this people, and with what success he carries on their institutions." At the end of the book, he addresses these words to the reader:—"Observe all the art of Satan, and remember that it may insnare thyself. These are some of the stratagems we might enumerate: Satan strives to cover with a veil the truth of the Gospel, or to stop its course altogether, to corrupt men's minds, or lay the foundation of a new tyranny. But thou canst understand easily all that he is capable of doing; and what punishment is too great for those who conspire to the injury of the people, and the desolation of Christ's kingdom? Woe to ye who despise your brethren, afflicting them, oppressing them, and thus building fortresses, and raising strong walls for the kingdom of Satan. Woe to ye, I say"——

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* Esse diu mentitus erat se Papa per orbem
Semideumque virum, semivirumque Deum.
At vere hunc, retegente Deo, nunc esse videmus
Semisatanque virum, semivirumque Satan.

These authorities might be quoted for ever; but not to dwell too long on the same subject, we shall conclude our notices of this century with the two above-mentioned Italians, and pass over many others, who, however, are well worthy of attention. If we were to turn to other countries, what a mass of evidence might we not collect from their writers! We might, among others, quote the pamphlet published at Monaco, in 1586, and called, " Advice given to Italy, by a young French Nobleman ;" and the numerous works of Pierre Viret, in which we read in every page, such sentences as these against the Pope :—" Satan would make us believe that life is death, and death life."

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* See the note (A) at the end of the volume.

It must have been most mortifying to the pride of Rome to see these opinions increasing among her own clergy. Besides the three bishops and two monks whom we have already cited, Luther was a friar, and Petrarch a canon of the Romish Church, rich in ecclesiastical benefices, conferred on him by different pontiffs. And there were numberless others, who were in their hearts reformers, long before reform triumphed. The letters of Petrarch, from which we have made extracts, were, as we discover from the researches of the Abbé de Sade, and the Count Baldelli, addressed to the Bishops of Cavaillon and Padua, both men of exemplary lives ; and others, not less bold in their language, the poet sent to the prior of the Holy Apostles at Florence, whose answers were framed in a corresponding tone, or even stronger, as we learn from De Sade, who had read the whole correspondence. Thus thought and wrote men of high intellect and pure heart, learned and just persons, pious ministers of the Roman priesthood ; and what appears more singular is, that sometimes they scrupled not to hold this language before the Pope himself. For instances of this fact, we must go back a little.

Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, a prelate of great learning, and of a character so spotless, that many miracles were attributed to him after his death, expressed his opinions with infinite address, in the letter which he wrote to Pope Innocent IV. in 1253, in answer to a bull which he had received from Rome, conveying certain orders. " What is required of me concerning the government of my diocese, could only be expected to come from one leagued hand in hand with Antichrist and Lucifer; for it is diametrically opposed to the precepts of our Creator and Redeemer; but the head of our Holy Church is far different from Lucifer or Antichrist; wherefore, I hold it to be impossible that your holiness would ever give such orders to me." This letter enraged the Pope so much, that he was only prevented hurling his spiritual and temporal thunders against the offender, by the council of cardinals, who, with one accord, confessed the superiority of that learned and pious man, and declared that he had written nothing but the truth. This fact is minutely related by the contemporary historian, Matthew Paris, who tells us also, that shortly afterwards, the bishop having expired, lamenting the state of the church, and prophesying the fall of Rome; the Pope determined to shew some signal insult to his remains, when the soul of the pious man descended from Heaven, clothed in episcopal pomp, and seizing the crosier, inflicted a severe personal chastisement on his holiness.

But what shall we think when we find that among the cardinals themselves there was one who entertained the same sentiments, and had the boldness to express them before the Pope in full consistory. The Abbé de Sade cites the authors from whom he quoted the fact, which happened in Petrarch's time.—" One day, while the Pope (Clement VI.) was holding a consistory, a cardinal, whose name did not transpire, adroitly dropped a letter which was carried to the Pope, and read before the whole court. The inscription was in these terms: ' Leviathan, Prince of Darkness, to the Pope Clement, his vicar, and the cardinals, his counsellors and good friends.' And at the end there was: 'Given in the centre of hell, in the presence of a company of demons.' This letter enumerated all the crimes supposed to be committed by the prelates of the court, for which Leviathan praised them highly, exhorting them to continue to deserve his favour by their actions."*

We shall shortly notice other works written by members of the Romish Church, which will convince our readers that their opinions differed in no respect from those of the cardinal who wrote this letter.

The saints, who were canonized by Rome, and who at this very time are receiving the incense and vows of suppliants at their altars — even they were shocked at the depravity of the church, and gave utterance to similar sentiments. — "Rome (wrote St. Bridget) has become the whirlpool of hell, the house of Mammon, where the devil, the ruler of avarice, sits upon his throne, and sells the patrimony of Christ."

It must not be imagined, then, that the Pope was likened to Satan and Antichrist, and his court to hell and Babylon, allegorically. On the contrary, as we have already said, this opinion was almost a part of the protestant faith; it was taken from the doctrines of the Old and the New Testament, and particularly from the Apocalypse; it had been taught for years and years by a thousand zealous antipapal apostles; and it was the crime which gave birth to the inquisition, which, in order to stifle a far-fetched belief, destroyed the believers, who really thought, as a Gospel truth, that the Pope was the manifestation of Satan, predicted by the Evangelist; that his kingdom was the kingdom of Antichrist, reigning for his master, Satan, on earth; that, in short, in the Pope was hidden the spirit of Satan, intent on corrupting mankind. Doubtless, this was an extravagant opinion; but it was deeply rooted in the minds of men; — we may perceive this by the following specimen of the doctrine of the Albigenses, mentioned by the Abbé Pluquet in his

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* Mémoire pour servir à la Vie de Petrarque — the year 1351. See the letter of Leviathan in the original Latin, in Matteo Villani. B. 2. ch. 47.

Dictionary of Heresies : — " They believe that God made Lucifer, with the angels ; that Lucifer rebelled against God — that he was banished from heaven, with all the angels; and that he afterwards produced the visible world, over which he reigned ;" *— and hence they thought that the Pope was either Satan, or his vicar, reigning over the world, and they called him, in the words of Christ, " Prince of this world."

But without returning to those ages which we have already left far behind, we shall find the same things affirmed by a successor of those ancient writers, viz. Jean Léger, the minister of the Valdenses, who were, as he tells us, synonimous with the Albigenses.† In the General History of his Church, we find a very long article, in which he endeavours to prove the same arguments. And what an opinion is there expressed of the Popes! No wonder at the invincible abhorrence the sectarians felt for their name! No wonder at the constancy with which so many suffered martyrdom rather than acknowledge the Roman Pontiff as the true and lawful head of the church.

This author, after quoting many authorities of ancient fathers and modern divines, who adhered to the apostolical revelation, says : " We can never sufficiently admire the wonderful dispensations of Providence, that, although the learned differ with regard to the thousand years when Satan was to be unloosed, some reckoning from the time of our Lord's birth; others, from his death ; and others again, from the destruction of Jerusalem ; — still, whichever opinion we follow, we shall find that at the end of a thousand years a Pope was reigning, in whose person,

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* Art. Albigeois.

† They were called by different names—sometimes Valdenses, and sometimes Albigenses, from the city of Albi in Languedoc ; sometimes Lombards, because their religion flourished particularly in Lombardy, and thence spread throughout Italy. (Hist. Gen. des Eglises Vaud. part 1, page 155.)

even by the confession of his own creatures, the unchained Satan was recognized, and Antichrist manifested. At all these three periods, the Popes, to show more strongly in their persons the identity of the devil, exercised the art of magic, as the Cardinal Benno, an irreproachable witness against Rome, proves in his life of Hildebrand. If we reckon from the birth of Christ, at the end of a thousand years reigned Sylvester II., of whom the same Cardinal says, that he rose from the abyss, by God's permission, soon after the thousand years were accomplished. Platina, in his life of this Pope, repeats the same thing, as does Nicholas de Lyra in *Morali Glossa*," &c. &c. He proves similar circumstances in the persons of the Popes who reigned in the other two periods, finishing with Gregory VII., of whom he writes: "It is this Pope (according to Conrad Abbas Uspergensis, in his chronology under the year 1080) who was called by the bishops, in the Council of Brixen, the false monk, the prince of abominations." (Jean Léger, page 146, &c.)

And have we never heard, in our own days, the same doctrines repeated seriously, by Protestants learned in divinity, both in the pulpit and in their writings?

We should make this chapter a volume, were we to cite all the writers who have described the Pope to be Satan and Antichrist. One of the most accurate of living historians, Sismond de Sismondi, in his observations on the calamities of which the south of France was the theatre, during the thirteenth century, relates the origin of those events which took place subsequently in many countries of Europe. He writes thus: — "Many sects existed simultaneously in Provence; and this was the necessary consequence of the freedom of inquiry, which was the essence of their doctrine. With one accord, they considered that the Romish Church had changed the nature of Christianity, and that she was the object described in the Apocalypse as the woman of Babylon. Although it was in the countries where the Provençal language was spoken, and particularly in Languedoc, where the Patarin creed had made the swiftest progress, it had not failed to spread itself into other Christian lands, as Italy, Lorraine, Germany, and Spain. The Pope Innocent III., instead of trying to convert them, ordered his ministers to burn their chiefs, scatter their flocks, and confiscate the property of those who refused to bend their will to his. And in pursuance of this command, several chiefs of the new communion were burnt at Nevers, in 1198, and the following years. The intolerance of the Pope was roused by symptoms of the change of opinions which he began to see drawing near to himself. Persecution, in scattering the sectarians, had spread the germs of the reformation in every country where the Roman tongue was spoken. In vain the inquisition believed itself able to force human reason to bow down, and to impose one sole rule of faith. To maintain the unity of belief, the church had recourse to the expedient of burning all those who separated themselves from her; but although, for 200 years, the fires were never quenched, still every day saw Catholics abjuring the faith of their fathers, and embracing the religion which often guided them to the stake. In vain Gregory IX., in 1231, put to death every heretic whom he found concealed in Rome: his own letters, addressed in 1235 to the bishops of that part of Italy, show that, in spite of the severity of the inquisition, the Patarini ceased not to increase in numbers.—Hist. des Français, v. 6 & 7.)

Thus, in various ways, were openly taught those doctrines, which had previously been kept a profound secret by the sects who entertained in private the principles of the reformed church: they wandered about Europe, making the south of France their principal head-quarters; and thence they dispersed themselves all over Italy; where, historians inform us, that they were known as Lombards, or Patarini, as early as the eleventh century, which was the most remarkable crisis in the sacred affairs of Europe.

Those who remember what was said at the commencement of this chapter,—where we showed that the prophetic allegories of the Apocalypse, and the reprobate actions of Rome together (which, by a fatal coincidence, corresponded to a hair's breadth) caused the change which then came over the minds of men, who were disgusted still more by the notorious cruelties of the popes,—will perceive very clearly, that that century was fated to see the commencement of the melancholy struggle which, for several following ages, convulsed the whole frame of Christianity. It makes the heart of a true Christian bleed, to think of the fatal error of the Latin church; which, by persecuting others, laid the foundation of its own irreparable ruin. That these opinions were most injurious to it cannot be denied; but the means taken to destroy them were, of all others, the most likely to strengthen and render them more deeply rooted. St. John prophesied that Satan's delegate would use horrid cruelties, and inundate Babylon with the blood of Christ's martyrs; and the Pope, to prove that he was not that delegate, did use horrid cruelties, and caused Rome to overflow with the purest of Christian blood! According to some historians, no less than two millions of human beings were sacrificed to the resentment of Rome, down to the year 1650. And this was the means taken to contradict the evidence of those who believed that the Evangelist really saw in the spirit the sanguinary power of the popes, when he wrote—"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints," &c. &c.—"And I saw, under the altar, the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth."—(Rev. xvii. 6; vi. 9.)

The least reproach that can be made against the Romish church for all her deeds, is a total want of prudence. Her enemies possessed this virtue, and turned it into a weapon of tremendous force against her, which fell when she was least prepared for the blow. Too feeble to meet them on terms of equality, she opposed cunning to strength; not being able to wage war openly, she carried it on secretly. The next chapter, and the rest of this volume, will show how far her efforts were successful.

CHAPTER II.

SECRET LANGUAGE AGAINST ROME.

The English Historian, Matthew Paris, cites, under the year 1243, a long Latin letter, which was written during the reign of the Emperor Frederick II., by a deserter from the sect, named Ivan of Narbonne, and addressed to Giraldus, Archbishop of Bordeaux; in this letter, he relates that, being persecuted in his own country as a Patarin, he fled into Italy, where he was cordially received, and generously assisted at Como, by others of the same sect, to whom he made himself known; he says that he found them scattered about in every city through which he passed; that he solemnly promised them that he would go and preach their doctrine, and persuade men that the faith of Peter (meaning the Pope,) leads not to salvation; that they had well regulated communions, and superintending bishops; that he learned many of their regulations, and among others, that they sent disciples at their own expence to Paris, from various cities of Tuscany, and Lombardy, to learn there the art of making use of the subtleties of logic and theology, for the furtherance of their doctrine, and that sectarian merchants travelled about to the different fairs, to seek for proselytes; he adds too, that when, after leaving Como, he passed through Milan, Cremona, and Venice, &c., as far as Vienna; he was always recognized and welcomed by means of signs. *

The Abbé Pluquet says: "Towards the tenth century, they spread into Italy, and had considerable establishments in Lombardy, whence they sent preachers, who perverted the minds of many." He adds, that these Albigenses or Patarins believed in the visible reign of Satan on the earth. This belief being common to so many persons, it is very certain that they must have communicated with each other in some particular language; and that they did so, will be proved by their own avowal, and by other and unquestionable evidence. Our examination will show that there is no secret sect which has not both signs and language peculiar to itself. From themselves we shall learn the nature and rules of this language, and we shall see with what imperceptible and consummate art they made use of it, in order that its existence might be undiscovered, for their very lives were at stake. Before its nature is explained to us, we may almost divine it. Legrand d'Aussy correctly wrote that the art of speaking *in allegories* is a device which naturally enters the mind of a man of talent. Those who are groaning under any yoke, will easily understand how gladly men, in times of persecution, embraced this resource, when the desire of telling truths, which might have served the cause of the oppressed, and the fear of telling them, which would have exasperated the oppressors, left them no other alternative than that of covering them with a veil.

The allegorical language was founded on the opinions then predominant, which were of two classes, profane, and sacred; and from these were derived the different styles of mystic figures, the mythological, and the scriptural; by means of which, the world was described under two aspects,—as what it was, and as what it ought to become. The ages of iron and gold; the deep vale of sin, and the lofty mountain of virtue; Avernus and Elysium, and other similar poetical imageries, are all ingenious mythological fancies. The scriptural afford a not less abundant store: first, we have Adam innocent, and sinful; in his first state placed in the Garden of Eden, on the top of a sunny mountain, full of flowers, fruits, and domestic animals; and in the last, banished to a world of tears and darkness, full of tribulation and sorrow; there, peace, abundance, life, joy, and happiness; here, war, poverty, death, sadness, and misery. Then again, the woful slavery in Babylon, and the joyful return to Jerusalem; the iron age of the one, and the golden age of the other; an allegory equally taken from the old and the new Testament, as in the Revelation, the wicked Babylon, and the holy Jerusalem, are described in contrast. Again, the condition of mankind under the dominion of Satan, after the original sin, is contrasted with Christ's holy kingdom, after the divine redemption. And figures of allegory we may also call Hell and Paradise, with all the different descriptions and ideas associated with each. These were the weapons with which talent made war on power, turning the erudition of paganism and the sacred doctrines into dark meanings, in order to wound its enemies secretly, and leave them no field whereon to meet it. But to succeed in this warfare, with what skill must the writer have armed himself! with what dissimulation cloaked his meaning! what a variety of resources must he have had in store! One false step would have led him to a fatal precipice.

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* See the note B. at the end of the volume.

But what caution could be overstrained in times when liberty of conscience was forbidden throughout Europe, and when no feeling of the heart could be disclosed with impunity? We have seen already the fate which awaited those who refused to prostrate themselves before the all-powerful colossus. Petrarch's letters *sine titulo* were never heard of, during his life, and when they were published, the names of those to whom he wrote them were suppressed; for the mere fact of having received such letters, and far more of having composed them, would have been deemed a crime deserving of the flames. The only means then by which the oppressed could safely vent their feelings was, by having recourse to a figurative language, which would be understood by those only who knew its secret force. Petrarch tells us as much, and even more than this, in the Latin pastorals which he published in his own life-time; but then those pastorals were not understood except by those who possessed a key to the conventional jargon in which they were written. Some centuries later, critics began to perceive that these pastoral dialogues, which appear almost aimless, are in point of fact, tremendous satires against the Pope and his court. Those formidable personages are described in the blackest colours; but who could or would identify them? The papalists saw nothing beyond poetical beauties; and the initiated, who well knew that those beauties were used as veils to the real meaning of the writer, kept their knowledge carefully concealed. The first read of nothing but flocks and shepherds; the last saw before their eyes far different flocks, and shepherds, who under their outward garb, were ravenous wolves.

In this respect, Petrarch was an imitator only. There are few ignorant of the fact that Virgil's eclogues all allude to contemporary events; that they are mostly a masked history; and that the pretended shepherds are illustrious citizens. Thus, for instance, in the first eclogue, Tityrus, who "fills the groves with Amaryllis' name," is Virgil himself celebrating Rome, whose sacerdotal name was, according to some, Amaryllis. Augustus is transformed into a God with a temple and altar:

"—————— a Deity bestowed,
For never can I deem him less than God, &c. &c.—Past. 1.*

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* This idea of deifying the Emperors was not confined to poetical fictions only, for we know that the Cæsars after their apotheosis had their

Tityrus, who forsook Galatea for Amaryllis, is the poet who quitted Mantua, and went to Rome.

> "Nor Amaryllis would vouchsafe a look,
> Till Galatea's meaner bonds I broke."[†]

Thus these two cities are represented by two shepherdesses, and the same may be said of other pastorals of the Latin poet.[‡] Petrarch then, and almost all his contemporaries and followers who wrote Latin pastorals, not excepting Dante, imitated their classic model; and it is easy to divine why the copies are so much more obscure than the original, as Tityrus—Virgil sang Amaryllis—Rome; so Stupeo—Petrarch made love to Daphne—Laurel. It is certain that Petrarch's pastorals are all allegorical, for he declares it himself; and it is not less certain that cities and the powers ruling over them are represented under the form of women, as well by profane as by sacred writers; as we might prove by a host of examples, taken from poetry, painting and sculpture, but principally from the holy volume. We need go no further for instances of this than the book of Revelations, which in Petrarch's time was deeply studied. There we see the wicked Babylon and the New Jerusalem described as two females; the one shameless; the other, chaste. The first represented in a horrid desert, the last on a high and lofty mountain. We have evident proofs throughout his works, and particularly in the before-cited letters, how attentively

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temples, altars, priests and victims. According to the general opinion of the learned, the Gods of antiquity were all Princes, as Jupiter in Greece, Serapis in Egypt, &c. &c., and among the eastern nations, from whom all Pagan theology is derived, there were, and still are people whose only deity is their sovereign!

[†] Mantua was called Galatea, or Nymph of the waters, probably because it is surrounded by waters. (See Virgil's commentators.)

[‡] The Eneid is generally considered an allegory as well as the pastorals. Petrarch in several writings; Boccaccio in his Genealogy, and Dante in the Convito, mention it as such; and Bishop Warburton interprets the descent of Eneas into Tartarus and Elysium into an allegorical description of the sacred mysteries of Eleusis.

Petrarch had studied this sacred book; we may therefore reasonably suppose that, in his pastorals, St. John was his guide as well as Virgil.

Of the twelve which he composed, only some few have been partially interpreted; the others still remain unfolded; and especially the *Amor pastorius* in which Daphne, synonimous with Laurel, and signifying Laura, converses with the poet; and the *Laurea occidens*, in which he appears to speak of the death of Laura, represented by a mystic laurel.

Ginguené says: "Almost all the eclogues of Petrarch are in this enigmatic and mysterious style; and without a key (which one cannot always find) it is impossible to understand them. Most of them relate to the events of his own life; and the speakers are sometimes, under feigned names, the most illustrious persons of the time. Some of them are real satires, such as the sixth and seventh, in which the Pope, Clement the sixth, is plainly described under the name of Mition, (from *mitis*, clement.) In the sixth St. Peter, under the name of Pamphilus, reproaches him severely for the state of languor in which he finds his flock. (Hist. Litt. d' Ital. v. 2. p. 477.) and Mition (the Pope) answers him thus: "I have entered into a compact with robbers, and it has been ratified with the blood of hogs on the altar of the king of hell; it may be odious to the Gods above, but it is sacred to those below, and accepted as lawful by them, to whom it is offered up a sacrifice with money."

"In the second eclogue, (says the same writer,) Mition appears in the scene with the nymph Epy, that is, the city of Avignon. The cardinals, disguised under the emblems taken from pastoral life, pass one after the other, in review before the nymph, who paints them all in the blackest colours. The subject of the following one is different, and still it contains severe strictures on Avignon and its court. The Cardinal Colonna speaks under the name of Ganymede, and the poet himself under that of

Amyclas. "I loathe," says the latter, "this wild forest, ('selva selvaggia,' Dante,) this licentious shepherd, this infected land," &c. In another, called *Conflictatio*, a shepherd relates a quarrel between Pan and Artichus; which names signify the kings of France and England. Artichus reproaches Pan with the favours he receives from Faustula, meaning the pontifical court.

Protected by the allegory, this pastoral was circulated publicly, and Petrarch slept in peace; for although it contributed to increase the hatred of the antipapal party against their rulers, those rulers only read it, as we read the bucolick of Theocritus. But what do the other eclogues conceal, which are still shrouded in darkness? Things even more terrible, and therefore more carefully hidden. We may assert, without the slightest hesitation, because we can prove our words, that from the first to the last, they are all deadly arrows launched against the Pope and Popery. Petrarch has openly confessed that his pastorals were written without intermission of time, and with one sole design, and that they conceal under a false dress the same matter as his letters *sine titulo*, of which we have already seen the nature. And he adds, that he concealed his indignation under this pastoral disguise, that he might be enabled to shew his real opinion of the wickedness he detested, without any danger, and at the same time please the taste of the age, which delighted in that style of writing. These last words prove that if one party did not understand him, the other did; and this could not have been the case without a concerted language. We know not how this ingenuous confession has escaped the notice of the critics, (and we are not aware that any speak of it) who have been so long endeavouring to discover the very thing which the author himself tells them. We have evidence, however, to prove that De Sade had read this avowal of Petrarch's, but that he concealed his knowledge for reasons which will be pointed out hereafter.

Before later critics began to suspect the secret meaning of these pastorals, and even before the author had declared them to have any, his intimate friend Giovanni Boccaccio, of whom it was said that he shared the very soul of Petrarch,* hinted to the world that the pastorals of his friend contained an internal pith, intended as food for a few, while the outward bark was for all. He speaks in very plain terms to such as will understand, in the 14th book of the Genealogy of the Gods. The title to the 10th chapter runs thus:—

"That it is folly to believe that poets concealed nothing under their outward words." "Some are so bold that, without the least authority, they scruple not to say that it is folly to think that our famous poets hide any meaning under their fables; they assert, on the contrary, that they write them merely to show the power of their own eloquence. What folly! Will any but the most ignorant of men say that these poetical fables are *simple*, and that they contain nothing beyond their outward meaning? To show their eloquence! Excellent reason! As if eloquence could be better employed than in exposing truths. When Dante succeeded (as he often did) in cutting the intricate knots of sacred theology, did any one deny him the title of a great theologian, as well as philosopher? And this being granted, shall we say that he had no meaning when he described the griffin drawing the car to the summit of the lofty mountain, accompanied by seven candlesticks, and as many nymphs, and all the pomp of a triumphal procession? Does any one believe that the celebrated and excellent Petrarch spent so many days and nights in study and labour on his pastorals, merely for the grace of the verses and the elegance of the language, or to describe the imaginary conversations of Pamphilius and Mition, and other careless shepherds, or to let us know that Gallo asked for the pipe of Tirreno? I might adduce the example of my own eclogue, being conscious of its meaning; but I judge it more prudent to abstain. Therefore, let these ignorant and vain chatterers be silent; for these illustrious men, who are nursed by the muses, and educated in the dwellings of philosophy, did surely conceal a deep meaning in their verses, and there are very few old women who could tell a story of witches and giants after dark (even if surrounded by their waiting women) without feeling in their minds that the words sometimes contain a hidden sense which checks any inclination to laughter." (Trans. of Gius. Betussi.)

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* "Petrarch contracted a friendship with Boccaccio of Florence; which was of so intimate a nature, that it seemed as though the two bodies were moved by one soul; and such was Petrarch's affection for his friend, that we learn by one of his own letters, that he constantly wore a ring on his finger which contained the likeness of both."—Squarciafico, Life of Petrarch.

In the next chapter, intitled, "That obscurity is not to be condemned in poets," he expresses himself thus:—"There are some things in their nature so abstruse, that even intellects of the highest order have difficulty in penetrating them. And I do not deny but that this sometimes applies to the works of our poets; but they are not therefore to be blamed; for it is the duty of a poet not to lay bare what he finds covered with a veil, but to shroud it rather with all possible care from the gaze of the vulgar. I confess that they sometimes are not only obscure, but unintelligible, except to those of great acuteness of intellect. But they, who complain so loudly of them, I hold to have the eyes of bats rather than of men. They must put off the old man, and become the very reverse of what they are: and then the things which appear most obscure will all seem clear and familiar. And I say again to those who will understand me: that to clear up doubtful points they must watch, read, study, and exercise all the powers of the brain: if they cannot arrive at the desired goal by one path, they must enter another: if any obstacle impedes their progress in that, they must take a third; until, if their powers fail them not, what is now dark will become light as day." (Trans. of Betussi.) He gives us further information in the two following chapters: the first is intitled, "What men do not understand they foolishly blame;" and the other, "On the unjust custom of pronouncing an opinion on things not known."*

That the reader may be aware of the meaning attached to the words written by this glory of Italian literature, this fervent admirer of Dante, and beloved friend of Petrarch, "I might adduce the example of my own eclogue, being conscious of its meaning;" we shall show a few specimens of this cunning pastoral, presenting it to the world for the first time in a true light. The satisfaction which all must feel in discovering the truth, under the veil of allegory, will, perhaps, beguile the ennui which is generally felt from too long, and too frequent quotations. And besides, the pastorals of Boccaccio are now so completely forgotten, that although ancient, they may be considered almost a novelty.

The subjects of the 8th eclogue are an avaricious and immoral old man, called Midas, and his wicked wife Lupisca, (in allusion to the Roman wolf;) and of this couple he speaks in these terms: "Midas the robber is the base slave to iniquity: O infamy! The aged Lupisca, who so lately gathered *acorns* and olives in the plains, has turned to guilt and avarice, and now insults heaven with her words, and *bewitches the lambs.* O may this wicked Lupisca be made to return to her acorns and olives again!" Similar to this, is the apostrophe of Petrarch to Papal Rome. "O wicked one! thy greatness is come from the river and the *acorns*, and is founded on the misery of others."*

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* He says elsewhere, speaking of Petrarch and Dante: "The Christian poets concealed nothing under their mystic language which was not true; especially when they feigned any thing belonging to the Deity or to the Christian faith; the bucolick of my excellent master Francis Petrarch is an instance of this; for whoever opens that book, not in envy, but with impartial discretion, will find under its outward covering, sweet and delighful instruction; and so also in the poem of Dante." (Comm. on the Div. Com. canto i.)

In the third, he goes back to the reign of Frederic II., and to the deaths of Manfred and Conradin, who were slain by the ravenous wolf, in the forest infested with lions, that is, with the princes of France,† to whom that forest was afterwards given by the wolf. The allegorical terms being once understood, every difficulty vanishes; and yet, no writer has hitherto perceived their hidden sense, or, at least, given his knowledge to the world. "I know not whether you have heard of the mountains and numerous plains which lie between the two seas of Italy, anciently separated from the great Pelorus. The shepherd Argus,‡ who was every way worthy of being celebrated, was the wealthy owner of those fields, and I have heard that he kept no less than a thousand flocks in his pastures. The horrid fates cut the thread of his noble life, but as a reward for his virtues he was transported to the stars. In his last moments, he bequeathed his woods to the youth Alexis; who was one day carelessly leading his flocks through the meadows, when he lighted suddenly upon a fierce and raging she-wolf. He pursued his path through the darksome wood, and the cruel beast pursued him, sprang upon him, and seizing him by the throat with her fangs, held him fast until she had deprived him of life. This is the story as it is related, and many persons say that that same wood is the haunt of lions.[*] As soon as the tidings of this sad catastrophe were carried to Tityrus, who was then in the cave which bounds the Ister, he bitterly wept, and calling up an innumerable number of dogs from the deep valleys of the Danube, and collecting together his stoutest husbandmen, he forsook his hills and flocks, and marched in haste to cut down the noxious wood, in the hope of being able to seize the wolf and the lions together, and make them pay the penalty of their cruelty, for the murdered Alexis was his own brother."

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* In the Sonnet "Fiamma del Ciel."

† The princes of the imperial house of Suabia were figured as *eagles*, and the princes of France as *lions*.

‡ Boccaccio himself, speaking confidentially to a friend, of the secret meaning of his eclogues, informed him that he sometimes called the Emperor a shepherd. "Among all the shepherds of the earth, that is, among all her kings, the emperor was reckoned the chief. The victorious and triumphant Cæsars are the first of shepherds." (Manni. Hist. of the Decam. p. 59.) How deeply Frederic II. was concerned in the antipapal sects, will be shewn elsewhere.

Of the same wolf he speaks also in the 9th eclogue, where he describes her as howling over her two cubs, in allusion to Rome and her two Guelphic pupils; and this allegory is really founded on history; Guelph being a corruption of wolf; hence, in figurative language the Guelphs were always called wolves; and Dante called Florence, which they had made their chief abode, the cursed and miserable den of wolves.[†]

The 10th eclogue, which is called "The Dark Valley," opposed to the *Sunny Mountain*, describes the Infernal regions, where reigns a cruel shepherd named *Plutarch*, who torments those who dwell in these dismal shades, with a flock of wolves; Boccaccio here hints to a friend; "The tenth eclogue is called the Dark Valley, because in it I have treated of infernal deeds." (Manni.)

"In the centre of Tænarus there is a cave where the sun never penetrates, and where those are imprisoned who are shut out from heaven. A watch-dog* stands at the mouth of the cave to guard the entrance, and when he sees any one approaching, he wags his tail at them, if they seek to enter the cavern; but flies at them if they attempt to leave it without the permission of the prince. Within are dark woods and rivers: and its appearance is altogether dreadful. The valleys are surcharged with a dense marshy fog, and the hills are blackened with smoke, The ice never melts there; the gloom never clears away, and there is a constant slow fire burning without the need of fuel to feed it. The place is infested with serpents, which are the pests of the land;† their tails lash us, their teeth bite us, and their black folds crush us. Plutarch and his dusky queen are seated upon a throne of rock; their faces are covered with lank and matted hair, and around them hover squalid filth and disease, with every ill that brings death. The cruel shepherd, surrounded by this train, and guarded by snakes with bloody scales, amuses himself in torturing his wretched flock: they are never refreshed with the shears, nor cheered by the sound of the pipe; but spirits and sheep are alike terrified with the blasts of a horn, which he ever and anon sounds from his rocky seat to awaken the Furies. Then do the cruel sisters appear on the steeps, and torment us with hydras; the ferocious ministers range the multitude, assign the respective punishments, and then hurl the condemned from the top to the bottom of the cliff. Plutarch himself casts the wolves into the flames, and, too often, alas! have I been flung into them in their company!" "O Lycidas, say no more, I implore thee! Thou hast then been with those wolves, thou hast been hurled into the flames beneath."

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[*] The lion who cut off the head of the young eagle, (Charles of Anjou, who murdered Conradin) caused the following inscription to be written on his tomb, which is still to be seen in the market-place of Naples:—

"Asturis ungue leo pullum rapiens aquilinum
Hic deplumavit, acefalonque dedit."

[†] Conrad II. and Lothario III. were the founders of the Ghibelline and Guelphic factions, according to most historians. They disputed the imperial throne after the death of Henry V. and transmitted to their posterity that fearful spirit which for ages desolated Germany and Italy. The Popes were subsequently at the head of the Guelphs, and the Emperors at the head of the Ghibellines.

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* In this watch-dog, we may recognize the Holy Office, the Cerberus of the age.

† Papal Rome was called in this jargon *Libica Tellus*, considered as Carthage, the enemy of Imperial Rome.

It appears that this Lycidas, who relates all these things, is a figure of some wretch who was employed by the Inquisition as an informer against the sect. A wolf, and tormented by the great Wolf nevertheless. Boccaccio tells his friend in confidence, that he called him Lycidas, "from Lyco, which signifies a wolf." (See Manni. p. 60.)

Why borrow any more from these sixteen Eclogues? They all speak the same language; of this we may be quite sure, although we have not yet the means of explaining them all satisfactorily. It seems that Boccaccio intended at first to dedicate his bucolic to the memory of Dante, but he afterwards offered it to Italy. We collect this from the last pastoral, in which the speakers are *Angelus*, that is, a messenger, and *Appenninus*, who represents Italy. Angelus presents to Appenninus a flock from Cerretio, a citizen of Cerreto, which most probably signifies Certaldo, with these words:—

Ang. "Tell me, I pray thee, if on these hills, or among the fruitful pastures of our shepherds, thou knowest the old Etruscan?"

App. "I recollect to have seen the aged man in our grottoes, where he sometimes came to rest himself after his labours. I saw him too in the cave of the Cyclop Ravennate,* and also slowly walking through the marshy woods. I beheld him when he came to visit the Venetian hills.† There never lived a shepherd, whether in Arcadia, Sicily, Greece, or Italy, to whom Pales granted so much authority in the fields. Fauns and nymphs rise up in reverence when they see the venerable man approaching, and woods and groves, caves and fountains, unite together to do him honour. The dwellings of the gods are open to him at all times, and even the silent gates of

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* The Lord of Ravenna, under whose roof Dante died. The princes, in this jargon, are always called giants.

† Shortly before his death, Dante went as ambassador from Ravenna to Venice.

Dis are for this Tuscan unbarred. To him, therefore, Angelus Cerretio ought to send his sickly flock."

Ang. "He would have blushed to send a gift so valueless to that great shepherd, who is used to have the controul over kings' herds; therefore Appenninus, waste no thought on my trifling offering."

Doubtless, Boccaccio knew, not only the secrets of Petrarch, but those of Dante, to which we shall now turn our thoughts. Why did he not then reveal them in his commentary on the Divina Commedia? From the same reason which made him conceal his own — from his professed maxim, that it is the duty of a poet not to lay bare what he finds veiled, but on the contrary, to shroud it with all possible care. To reveal the language and the secrets of Dante, would have been to publish his own. But who obliged him to give a wrong explanation of what he understood rightly? He was reproached for this by some who well comprehended the mystic volume, and he, indigent, and paid by the Florentine republic to disfigure Dante, answered that his poverty forced him to it; that he repented deeply; and that the reproaches of his own mind had made him resolve to discontinue so impious an undertaking. And this was, perhaps, the principal motive (together with his advanced age), which made him give up the prosecution of this ill-judged design.* Before we prove incontestably that the Certaldese commentator knew the secrets of the Florentine bard, we must see what those secrets were, and then we shall know that he neither could nor ought to have revealed them. Our inquiries will be prepared by a few preliminary observations.

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* Boccaccio's commentary on Dante's poem, scarcely comprehends the sixth part; of the hundred cantos, he did not quite complete seventeen.

CHAPTER III.

OPINION OF MODERN CRITICS ON THE ALLEGORY OF DANTE'S POEM.

Perhaps no classical work in any language has attracted the notice of so many speculative interpreters, as the poem of Alighieri. But do their opinions harmonize together? By no means; on the contrary, the Divine Comedy has been turned into a field of battle, on which commentators attack each other, some with mockery, some with abuse, and generally speaking, in terms of such violent invective, that it is hard to say whether the feelings they excite in the minds of those to whom they all offer themselves as exclusive and infallible guides, partake most of pity or amusement, anger or contempt. From what cause arise all these discrepancies? Have they not all been wandering far from the right path, while each thought himself in sole possession of it? That in spite of all their researches the poem has never, up to the present time, been thoroughly understood, is now the opinion of the most learned investigators of its secret pages; it is the sentence pronounced and confirmed by those who have long and deeply studied them. We need only here refer to the most recent writers on the subject.

Ugo Foscolo, who studied the poem most laboriously, calls it the *unknown art* of Dante; and adds that, notwithstanding the many travellers who have tracked the footsteps of Alighieri, through the region by him trodden, "*frightful from its darkness and its labyrinths*, the road is still the same, and the greater part of this immense forest remains after the labours of five centuries, involved in its primitive darkness." (See the Edinb. Review. Feb. 1818. art. Dante.)

The Rev. Henry Cary, the learned translator of the poem, after a long and profound study of his original, declares that "the line of reading which the poet himself appears to have pursued, (and there are many vestiges in his works, by which we shall be enabled to discover it) must be diligently tracked; and the search, I have little doubt, would lead to sources of information equally profitable and unexpected." *

In 1824, The editors of the *Biblioteca Italiana* wrote: "The interpretation of the allegory of the Divine Comedy is an undertaking of the greatest importance and difficulty. Allusions and allegories were in fashion in Dante's time; he followed the current, and could not steer quite clear of the confusion and doubts which are inseparable from this style of composition; and which necessarily increase as the work becomes more ancient." No. 100, page 47.

Giulio Perticari and Vincenzo Monti, both fervent admirers and followers of Dante, and both engaged together in the attempt to clear up his obscurities, were of the same opinion. Monti introduced, in a dialogue, the shades of the poet and Perticari, and put the following words into the mouth of the latter, with whose real sentiments he was fully acquainted:

Dante. "Have the Commentators succeeded in clearing up the difficulties of my poem? has the mystic darkness, in which I sometimes wrapt my ideas, been dispersed?"

Perticari. "Listen to those Commentators, and they will all tell thee, yes; ask thy admirers, and they will say, no; and I am one of these."

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* See the Life of Dante, p. 50, prefixed to the translation.

With these few words Monti explained Perticari's opinions as well as his own; he had grown old in the study of Dante: and this dialogue was written in 1825, only three years before Italy had to lament his loss.

Quirico Viviani, the editor and annotator of the Bartolinian Manuscript, wrote in 1827: "Before we can unravel the web of Dante's allegories, we must forget ourselves, as well as the society to which we belong; identify ourselves with the age in which he lived; range ourselves on the side either of the Guelphs, or of the Ghibellines; alternately with the poet, love and hate; clothe our fancy with all that he imagined in his most excited moments; bear in mind all his opinions, &c. Until some one appears who can do all this, there is little hope that the veil will be drawn aside which conceals these verses; therefore we must confess our ignorance, and rest satisfied with the little that we know." *

But above all, the Canon Dionisi, who spent many years in the examination of the manuscripts of Dante, and who wrote on them *Aggiunte critiche e Blandimenti funebri*, reaped so little fruit from his researches, that at the end of the last century, he confessed that "The inward, mysterious, and most precious part of the great work of Dante Alighieri, remains in several places almost an undiscovered treasure; so that, veiled with those secret things, which are neither few nor trifling, it is like some picture, which is hung up in a dark place, where none can see it in a proper light, nor appreciate the beauty of its colouring or design." †

With these unequivocal declarations from the most profound connoisseurs of the poem, men who have been esteemed as such, by the consent of the whole literary world before him, no wonder if the inquiring reader hesitate to give his undivided acquiescence to the commonly received explanations of this work; he seems to wander before a phantasmagoria of beings real and unreal, which vanish from his sight every moment; and turning from a perusal of these expounders, he feels the satisfaction of one who, while parching with thirst, dreams that he is drinking.

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* Letter to the Mar. Trivulzio, prefixed to vol. iii. of the Ediz. Bartolin.

† Pref. to the Ediz. Bodoniana of the Div. Comm.

Let us boldly enter this dark sanctuary, and question this new Delphic oracle, which has never as yet given a satisfactory reply to the prayers of its most assiduous worshippers. But let us not be mistaken for one of those who have fought so many literary battles on this subject; we quarrel with no one: we may be visionary, but never uncourteous.

CHAPTER IV.

DANTE AND HIS AGE.

Dante Alighieri, when exiled from his country and ruined in his fortune by the intrigues of Pope Boniface VIII., wandered from one city of Italy to another, without food or shelter, eating the bitter bread of charity, and lodging in the dwelling of the stranger. Banished as a Bianco or Ghibelline, (the party opposed to the Pope,) those political opinions which had cost him so dear, were still more obstinately cherished; and it appears that the least word uttered against his own party, was sufficient at any time to excite in him a burst of fury. "Never (writes Boccaccio in his life of the poet,) was there a prouder Ghibelline, or a more deadly enemy of the Guelphs. I grieve to be obliged to confess, what, however, is publicly known throughout Romagna, that his hatred extended even to the women and children of the adverse party, and this feeling died but with himself." No wonder that he hated that party; for while he was roving in poverty and distress about Italy, he was not likely to forget the permanent cause, not only of his own individual misfortunes, but of those which afflicted his unhappy country. Before we proceed further, it will, perhaps, be useful to offer a few reflections on the state of Italy, when Dante composed his poem; and we trust that they will not only fully justify his conduct with respect to the party whose cause he espoused, but explain the design of those who shared his upright intentions and sad reward.

No Pope was ever enterprising or fortunate enough to reduce the whole of Italy under his sole dominion, although they all declared themselves its head and lawgiver; whether the nature of the theocratical government did not admit of such a union; or that the conflicting opinions of so many various provinces and restless people rendered it almost impossible; or that the jealousy of other powers had always raised an insuperable barrier to the design. Whatever might have been the cause, it is much to be regretted that Rome did not become the capital of the whole Peninsula, united under the government of the Sovereign Pontiff, elected chief of the religious and political affairs of the country. If when invested with the power of religion only, she succeeded in dictating to most of the European monarchs, to what a height of grandeur would she not have risen had both powers been united in her! The Popes were raised to the throne at an age when the passions cease to be tumultuous; they were assisted by a chosen number of wise counsellors; and they were the depositaries and guardians of the most holy religion, which knows no distinction of persons, but considers all men as one great family of brethren; could they therefore, but have governed with this two-fold power the clever and energetic people, whom nature destined for the country in which they were placed; what foreign potentate would have ventured to set his foot on Italian ground? The greatness of ancient Rome under her Pagan Emperors might have been surpassed by modern Rome, governed by the head of the Christian Republic. All those abuses might have been prevented, which gave so many advantages to the enemies of the Latin Church, and in that case, her pastor would have been too highly venerated to need the assistance of foreigners to silence the many who exclaimed against perverted doctrines and false miracles. Certain of the truth which he upheld, and blending the light of philosophy with that of revelation, he would have blunted the malice of scrutinizing enemies, who, dazzled with his power, would have ended by bowing down before it. Standing on higher ground than mere public opinion, he would never have allowed the fear of it to render him cruel. Virtuous from his profession, he would not have craved the silence of the world, to enable him to keep up his character for holiness. Rich enough, he would not have sought any secret ways of obtaining money. Strong enough, he would not have humbled himself to procure foreign alliances, and so barter honour for protection. We should not have beheld the conclave obsequiously obeying the commands of Austria or France; nor Peter denying his Master through fear; but we should have seen Rome free and mighty, holy and inviolable, not only infallible but invincible; and her hierarch, supreme head of the Latin church and the Italian monarchy, would have been in the highest sense of the words *Imperator augustus et Pontifex maximus.*

But without stopping to muse over a blissful dream, let us consider the sad reality. The Popes not being able, or perhaps not willing to unite the whole country of Italy, under their diadem, felt the danger to which it was exposed from others. Hence, it was their unceasing care to prevent any other ruler from acquiring dominion in the land, lest such newly-arisen power might dictate to themselves. And when any powerful sovereign, supported by well-founded claims, attempted the enterprize, no means nor art was left untried by the Roman Court in order to frustrate his success; and hence, the many disputes between the Empire and the Priesthood, and the uplifting of the crosier against the sceptre, each time that the design was renewed.

While their own political and selfish interests induced these autocrats to keep Italy divided into several small states, dependent on so many rulers who were mere instruments of their own, they took especial care to keep their secret purpose concealed from the world under a semblance of generosity. They well knew that the love of freedom is of native growth in the hearts of the children of that land, and they employed their priestly satellites, who had great influence over the minds of the people, to persuade them that Christ's vicars, the Popes themselves, were the best guardians of the common liberty; and that, as such, they would never permit the noblest country of Europe to be subjected to a military tyrant. Meanwhile, the general name of Italian was gradually being lost in the separate dominations of Sicilians, Romans, Tuscans, Lombards, Genoese, &c. &c.; and again, the inhabitants of cities began to assume an exclusive name, as the Florentines, Paduans, Brescians, &c. &c., and considering themselves almost a distinct nation, fancied, in the excitement of a mutual antipathy, that they were fighting for liberty, while they were but seeking each other's destruction, and perpetuating the slavery and weakness which were the fruits of their fatal disunion. All those embers of discord which still smoulder there, that lofty idea of themselves, and insulting contempt for their neighbours, are the miserable inheritance of by-gone jealousies. It naturally followed that Italy, not being linked by that unity whence come strength and independence, but on the contrary, nourishing in her own bosom the mortal seeds of disunion and weakness, fell an easy prey to the foreign armies, who came and conquered her piece-meal. And how could these disasters be averted, when every province, and sometimes every city looked upon its nearest neighbour as a foreigner or an enemy, and considered its misfortunes a blessing to itself? A kingdom divided against itself shall be desolate, is the sentence pronounced by God, and therefore infallible.

How did the hearts of the wise die within them at the sight of so much misery! Dante compared his enslaved country to a ship without a pilot, overtaken by the tempest, and Grazioli, his contemporary, exclaimed:

"A divided kingdom has no defenders—unhappy Italy! Such is thy fate; for, in thee, neighbour seeks to destroy neighbour, either by force or by fraud."

More than one monarch attempted to knit together the disjointed parts of this mutilated body, and restore it to its original grandeur; but the thunders of the Vatican appalled them; and, at their sound, the rebellious members realized the fable of the Sacred Hill. Frederic II. was among the number of these illustrious but unfortunate Princes; he was excellent as a politician and warrior, as a philosopher and poet, but three successive Pontiffs hurled their anathemas against him, and at the third attack, his strength failed him, and he disappeared.*

By such means, the Popes succeeded in disuniting the people; causing their patriotism to become guilt, and their virtuous sentiments most dangerous vices, and turning their desire for liberty into an instrument wherewith to enslave them. Their machinations were undiscovered except by those few learned men, who, perceiving the real though hidden cause of their country's misery, sighed for the interposition of some powerful monarch, who surmounting every obstacle raised by his antagonist, and conciliating all hearts, might come like a heavenly messenger to free them from the chains of him whom they called, and believed to be Satan. And as this Saviour could be no other than the Emperor of Germany, who boasted hereditary claims on Italy, on him were turned the anxious eyes of the Ghibellines.

Before men have been tried in the school of experience, it too often happens that their minds are engrossed by abstract maxims and ideas of a theoretical perfection, which in practice evaporates and dies away. So these philanthropists, deceived by their own hearts, worshipped a mental idol, which they endowed with superhuman qualities, and then they sought to meet the distempered vision in a human form, and as usual they sought in vain. As the mind regulates all the movements of the body, and as the All-Wise gives life and motion to the universe, so did they dream that the whole earth might be governed by the head of an empire which never existed beyond their own imaginations. Proud of the ancient grandeur of their native country, whose remains they cherished in her laws, in her literature, in her ancient monuments, in her political history, and in her vast extent, which they magnified even beyond the truth; their ambition was, that Rome should be the centre of this Empire, and that all other countries should acknowledge her as sole ruler. And this was the political creed, not only of Dante, but of all the learned men of the age, who were so enamoured with the phantom of their own brain, that they would have considered all else as valueless, if that proved unattainable. What madness! While their country was crushed and trampled on under their very eyes, to think of that country ruling over the united world! But their error arose from inexperience, and the love of science in early times usually produced this effervescence of the imagination. This fancied empire, they called in the language of Scripture, *the New Jerusalem*, and the head of it *the king of kings*, who was to humble the pride of *the servant of servants*.

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* See the note C. at the end of the volume.

Such desires naturally became more ardent, as the state of anarchy in which their country was plunged, brought on endless changes, the shocks of adverse parties, reverses of fortune, hereditary hatreds, exiles, murders, and infinite miseries of every kind. History records no epoch more calamitous than this, which was commonly called the *Babylonish time*, in opposition to the so much wished-for *New Jerusalem*.

In that period, so fertile in allegories, this Babylonish

Time was figured by the statue seen by the real king of Babylon in his dream. We shall cite two witnesses only to bear us out in this assertion: one was a contemporary of Dante, and like him a Ghibelline, called Marsilio Menandrino, of Padua; he wrote a work at the time when the emperor was expected in Italy, called "Defensor Pacis," which, in its power, may be compared with the Monarchia of Dante. After comparing the Papal Court with Hell, and calling it, in the words of Job, "A land of darkness, &c., where the light is as darkness," he adds: "I have seen it, and have dwelt in the midst of it, and I can say from experience, that that court is like the terrible statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream, and described by Daniel in his 2nd chapter &c.: what does that statue signify, but the condition of the Roman Court and its Pontiff, once the terror of the wicked, now the object of abhorrence to the virtuous." (P. 2. Ch. 24.) Then he proceeds to show the resemblance between that statue and the papal court, and prophesies that the fall of the last will be as signal as the decay of the first. "On this colossus will fall a stone, that is, a monarch, on whom God will confer his power; and who, by divine, more than by human strength, will break and scatter to pieces the earthly part of this horrible and monstrous statue, viz: the frail feet which support it. He will exhibit, before the eyes of all princes and people, the false and wicked means which it employs, lay bare all its sophistry, and crush it with philosophy and revelation. What is contrary to nature, and to all laws, human and divine, as well as to reason itself, cannot long stand." The German theologian, Theodoric Uric, alluding to the same Babylonish Colossus, which was in reality a symbol of the Babylonish time, expressed himself thus: "The papal court, which was anciently *gold*, fell from gold to *silver;* then it turned to *iron*, and so stood obstinately for some time; but now it is all *clay*."

It was during this unfortunate period, that Dante, banished through the influence of the pope, made his pilgrimage throughout Italy, in search of a subsistence and a shelter. And what scenes did he there behold! At every step a crime, at every look a misfortune, and turbulence, alarm, blood, and misery every where. Could he shut his eyes to the cause of all this woe? It was while in this state of distress and poverty, that his poem was composed; and writing its various parts while he was wandering about, and often interrupting his labours, either to fly from the persecution which pursued him, or to procure the necessaries of life, how more than probable is it, that he checked many of his original impulses! His enemy was too formidable for him to venture openly to express all the just hatred he felt, a hatred which was continually aggravated by the weight of his own misfortunes, and the sight of those of others! What resource had he then? Silence! yes, such silence as Petrarch and Boccaccio observed in their pastorals: sometimes he did burst forth into an open exclamation, but he soon again veiled it in mystery; as in the *Monarchia* for instance, which was written at the time when the speedy arrival of the Emperor in Italy was looked for: "Not only do they defraud the Church, but what is worse, every day they usurp some ecclesiastical patrimony, and thus she is becoming poor and miserable. What can we say of such pastors? What can we say, when we see them squandering away property which should be inviolate, or else converting it into the aggrandizement of their own families? But perhaps it is better, with the materials we have already in our hands, to wait in patient silence, for the coming of our Saviour." (Book 2.)

A modern critic writes thus: "Dante's poem consists not so much in the vision of three kingdoms of another world, as in the moral and political picture he drew of his own time. He has described the vices of the age, and the faults and miseries of nations and their rulers.

His bitter and severe censure on the depravity of his time, his lively sallies against the abuses of every species of authority, his patriotic invectives against civil dissensions; in a word, his bold and happy idea of referring every thing to the history of his own age, and making use of a picture of the other world, to describe the excesses and wickednesses of this; these are the decisive traits which distinguish the Divine Comedy from all other poems, ancient or modern. Not being able to make the virtues or actions of his age the subject of an epic poem, he undertook the task of exposing all its vices; and truly, the annals of the world could not have supplied his pen with more abundant materials than he found in the melancholy state of affairs, national and foreign, at the period when he lived. That pen never appears so sublime, as when it traces the accumulated horrors which in those days afflicted the half of Christendom, and with noble courage unfolds, before the eyes of the world, the political crimes, and the vices of those men invested with supreme power, who influenced so directly the general confusion, in which a part of the Christian World was then plunged.* And this is the point of view in which we must consider the whole structure of Dante's poem." (Franc. Torti.)

The acute intellect of Madame de Stael led her apparently, to a similar conclusion. "Dante, banished from his father-land, carried into imaginary regions the memory of his own severe sufferings. His spirits ask with anxiety concerning the affairs of life, as the poet himself seeks tidings of his own country; and *Hell* appears before him, painted with the colours of exile." (Corinne, vol. 1.) Had the last clause in the sentence been inverted, the description would have been exact.

We may hence perceive that Dante, in his allegorical pilgrimage through the infernal regions, describes mystically his own real journey through Italy, in that Babylonish time for which his unlucky fate had reserved him. Boccaccio, in the language of the secret school, gives us an intimation of this, when he speaks of the principal allegory of the Inferno. "Our Dante, in the first part of his poem, called Hell, describes within Mount Ida, in Crete, a huge statue of an old man, *which looks towards Rome.* In every limb are fissures which distil drops of water, and these collected together, and passing into the caverns of Hell, form the river Acheron. But what these things mean, is still to be seen. Some affirm that, in ancient times, the Greeks used to send their condemned criminals as exiles into Italy, which is said to be near the *lower sea*, and hence they will have it, that both the river and the condemned were in Hell. The etymology of the word Acheron favours this fiction, being interpreted *without joy or health*, meaning that *exiles from their country* are without joy or health. Servio and Alberigo, both say that Acheron does not signify a river, but *the soil of Italy*."

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* He tells us immediately afterwards that he alludes to Celestine V., Boniface VIII., and Nicholas III.

Leo the Jew wrote also that the poets called Italy hell;* and we who have heard that the Monk Dysse called the heads of the church, Priests of Hell; and that the troubadour Figueiras cried "Rome, thy seat is fixed in the depths of the abyss;" besides much more that was written before Dante was born; we who have heard Boccaccio, in his infernal valley, speak of the cruel *shepherd Plutarch*, and of the furies and wolves; and Petrarch exclaim to Papal Rome—"Abode of all earthly vices, fountain of grief, dire prison, false, wicked Babylon, hell of the living;†" and Negri proclaim the Pope, "Half Satan, half man," clearly perceive that the poets *did* call Italy hell; and we may add, "that it was a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadows of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness." (Job. ch. 10.)

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* Dial. d'Am. p. 75. Ven. 1565.

† See the three well-known Sonnets, interdicted by Rome.

That Italy was in this state, while Dante the wanderer was composing his poem, is very certain, and history confirms the fact; that his poem is allegorical, is no less certain from his own assertions, and that it contains a deep and connected train of thought, we collect from his opinion on allegorical language: "I say that poets do not speak thus without reason, neither ought they ever to speak thus *without some object in view;* for it would be a disgrace to a poet if he were to array his verses in a figurative garb, and then, being questioned, if he could not cast aside that garb, and shew that his words had a *real meaning.*" (Vita Nuova.)

All this being premised, we are quite at a loss to divine how it has happened, that after five centuries of assiduous research and repeated attempts, not one of those intelligent enquirers who have so deeply meditated on the subject of the Divine Comedy, has ever penetrated the secret of its allegory. They certainly could not be ignorant of the political opinions and religious doctrines of the time, for they were inscribed in thousands of volumes; neither have those doctrines been lost or forgotten, for they are inherited by the Protestants of the present day. They knew that Italy was then swarming with Patarini, who professed those opinions, and they knew that Dante's own friends were burned alive by the inquisition as Patarini.* They were aware that he was a proud and unfortunate Ghibelline, and (by his own avowal) that his poem was allegorical. It would appear that the interpretation of this dark work must have followed from all these guiding clues, but it has not done so, in spite of the many hints scattered by the author himself throughout all his works.

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* Cecco d' Ascoli who, in his Acerba speaks of Dante, and gives us to understand that he was in correspondence with him, was burnt as a Patarin, six years after the death of Alighieri. (See Tiraboschi and Gio. Villani, under the year 1327.)

As the secret sense of Petrarch's bucolic remained long unknown, and in a great measure remains so still; as the hidden meaning of Boccaccio's pastoral is still undiscovered, with the exception of the small part we lately cited; so has it been with Dante's Commedia; and we may venture to say, without presumption, that we were the first to extract its buried essence, in our analytical commentary. From that work, some observations are here repeated, which will assist us in unravelling the mazes of the poem. The commentary itself met with a varied fate. Some who, in the fervour of intellect, seize the truth at one glance, welcomed its discoveries with enthusiasm, and pronounced them incontrovertible. Two critics applauded its ingenuity, (as they termed it,) but declared themselves still unpersuaded. One laughed at its extravagance; another raved against the imposture, pronouncing its author to be a mere quack. Gratefully acknowledging kindness, and calmly meeting abuse, we candidly confess that, feeling a high respect for the Catholic religion which we profess, it was with diffidence that we entered on the subject at all; at first, we endeavoured, while presenting the truth, to cover its sternest features with a thin veil; hoping that if some more acute than others did see it in its broad light, the greater number would have seen just enough, and no more; as we proceeded however, it became evident that the subject must be treated distinctly and boldly, or remain untouched. He who strikes the keys of an instrument feebly, will produce indistinct and inharmonious sounds, and will be considered a bad performer; and so have we been judged by many. The powerful reasons which have induced us now to expose to full view the means and end of the secret antipapal school, will in a more suitable place be explained; we only here protest that we do not depart from a lawful obedience to the Latin Church, by shewing what was thought and believed of her in less happy times. And we exclaim with Dante:

> "———— ye of intellect
> Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd
> Under close texture of the mystic strain."

"These words tell directly against those who, not understanding the things which are hidden under the veil of these verses (of the poem), insist that Dante meant nothing beyond their simple and literal meaning; surely by them they may clearly see that he *did* mean something more than they are able to comprehend from his outward words." (Boccaccio, Comm. on the above passage.)

CHAPTER V.

PRINCIPAL ALLEGORY OF THE INFERNO.

When Dante sent his poem to his protector, Can Grande della Scala, the captain of the Ghibelline league in Italy, he pointed out its nature in these words : — " The meaning of this work is not *simple*, or rather, it may be said to have *two meanings*; the first is in the words as they are read; the second is contained in the *things which the words signify;* the first is called literal, and the second allegorical. Therefore it is evident, that as there is a *double* meaning, the subject must be *double* also. In the first place, then, consider the subject of the work, taken literally, and then the *real subject*, taken according to the *allegorical meaning*. Now the literal subject is the state of souls after death ; but if you observe the words with attention, you will discover, that in the allegorical sense, the poet speaks of *this hell*, in which, *travelling as pilgrims*, we render ourselves either worthy or unworthy. Allegorically, then, the subject is *Man ;* who according as he exercises his power of free-will, becomes worthy of reward or punishment."

In the Convito, his doctrinal work, written in Italian prose, he considers vicious men as *dead*, according to the sentence in the Revelations against the angel of the church of Sardis : — " Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead;" and he explains the meaning of the verse

> "Ch' ei tocca un tal ch' è morto e *va per terra*."

With these words: — "By the laws of reason, I say, that the wicked are *dead*, though seemingly *alive*. *To live*, in man, is to use reason; therefore, if life be essential to man (that is, the use of reason,) whoever uses it not, is dead." (Treat. 4.) It is rightly said by critics, that the Convito is very useful, towards illustrating many parts of the Commedia.* According to the theory there laid down by him, he, from whom all the vices of the time proceeded, was the chief of the dead. And the provençal troubadour, who described the seat of Rome to be at the bottom of the abyss, added, that those who submitted to its dominion were *dead also*.

One of the methods by which the poet effectually succeeded in hiding his real meaning was, by separating the correlative parts from each other in the work; and still, by means of hints, almost imperceptible, drawing and uniting them together, as we shall see forthwith.

In these two expressions "the present world," and "the present time," the words *world* and *time* are equivalent to each other in sense and meaning. This being premised: Dante, in the Purgatory (canto 16.) asks the spirit of Marco, how it happens that the world is so destitute of virtue, and so full of wickedness.

> "The world, indeed, is even so forlorn
> Of all good, as thou speak'st it, and so swarms
> With every evil; yet, beseech thee, point
> The cause out to me."

The spirit answers, that the cause is

> "*Ill-conducting*, that hath turned the world
> To evil."

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* Monti calls it — "A book so necessary towards the understanding of many parts of the Commedia."

Adding, —

———— "Rome
Was wont to boast two suns [*], whose several beams
Cast light on either way, the world's and God's.
One since hath quench'd the other; and the sword
Is grafted on the crook; and so conjoin'd,
Each must perforce decline to worse, unawed
By fear of other."

The following words explain the real cause of the depravity of the time: —

"Therefore the multitude, who see their guide
Strike at the very good they covet most,
Feed there and look no further."

And Dante leaves us in no uncertainty with respect to this guide: —

" ———— *The church of Rome,*
Mixing two governments that ill assort,
Hath miss'd her footing, fall'n into the mire,
And there herself and burden much defil'd."

In the eighth canto, where he speaks of a family who preserved their virtue, in the midst of the general depravity, he again declares, in plain terms, that the world was corrupted by this wicked guide, or head.

"While the world is twisted from his course,
By a *bad head*, she only walks aright,
And has the evil way in scorn."—(Purg. 8.)

The poet's idea is manifest from his words; when Rome was virtuous the time was virtuous, and when she was wicked, the time was wicked. Now, the principal element of the Inferno is the *wicked time;* the same that Boccaccio calls the origin of all the rivers of Tartarus, described by Alighieri. In the fourteenth canto, it is presented under the aspect of a huge colossus, composed of various metals, corresponding with the different ages, of gold, silver, brass, and iron. And where does this wicked time, or colossus, who pours all its produce into hell, look? He, " at Rome, as in his mirror, looks." (14.)

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[*] The Emperor and the Pope.

In canto 19. Dante tells us, that St. John saw a figure of the *wicked popes*, when he beheld "her who sitteth upon many waters." Now we know that those waters are people; therefore, the waters which the wicked time pours out, as it looks towards Rome, are figures of corrupt nations,

> "The multitude who see their guide."

Let us follow their course even to their final destination. They flow to the bottom of the well of the abyss, where Satan sits; " dread seat of Dis." (Inf. 11.) This well is surrounded by a high wall, and the wall by a vast trench; the circuit of the trench is twenty-two miles, and that of the wall eleven miles. Now the outward trench of the walls of Rome, (whether real or imaginary we say not) was reckoned by Dante's contemporaries to be exactly twenty-two miles; and the walls of the city were then, and still are, eleven miles round.* Hence it is clear, that the *wicked time* which looks into Rome, as into a mirror, sees there the corrupt place which is the final goal to its waters or people, that is, the figurative Rome, " dread seat of Dis."

The characteristic vice of the papal court was avarice; all writers agree in this; and when the demon of avarice saw Dante descending into hell, he cried:

> "Pap' è Satan, Pap' è Satan, Aleppe."† (Inf. 7.)

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* " Two-and-twenty miles the valley winds its circuit," (Inf. 29.) says Dante, of the valley of the abyss.—" Twenty-two long miles," (Dittam. B. 2. ch. 31.) says Fazio degli Uberti, his imitator, of the trench of Rome. — " Eleven miles it winds," (Inf. 30.) writes Dante, of the wall of the well of Abyss; and " the walls of Rome are from eleven to twelve miles round" writes Nibbi, in the " Mura di Roma;" adding, that the present walls are the same as those of Honorius. (See p. 235. edit. of Rome, 1820.)

† In modern editions it is written *Pape*, in many ancient ones Papè. The Analytical Commentary has shewn, by many examples of similar words, that it should be written Pap' è.

Aleppe comes from the Hebrew word *Aleph*, prince; so the meaning of the demon's words is: the Pope is Satan, prince of this hell.

Let us here remark, that this verse, after confounding all the interpreters, was finally declared unintelligible. Now we comprehend its meaning. And the two measures, which we have already explained (of the trench and the wall) were always supposed to be introduced accidentally; but now we see their allusion. They are the only measures which we find in the Inferno, and they have no origin whatever in any scriptural doctrine. We shall soon understand the true meaning of other and similar allusions to Rome and her hierarchs.

The well of abyss, the central point of the region of guile, over which the demon Geryon presides, is surrounded with trenches; and a chain of bridges leads to the great wall of the well. Dante compares the trenches to those which encompass a fortified city; the bridges to those which lead to the city itself; and the sinners who pass over the first bridge, he likens to those who cross the bridge of St. Angelo, in Rome, and go to St. Peter's.

> "E'en thus the Romans, when the year returns
> Of jubilee, with better speed to rid
> The thronging multitudes, their means devise
> For such as pass the bridge; that on one side
> All front toward the castle, and approach
> St. Peter's fane."—(Canto 18.)

We cannot stop in this place to shew that the Geryon and Lucifer of Dante were one and the same person; this will be done elsewhere; and with respect to the bridges over which that demon presides, we must content ourselves with calling to mind a well-known saying: — *Pontifex a pontibus faciundis.*

Pliny has celebrated the 734 towers of the walls of Rome, of which more than half were still standing in Dante's time. He and other writers likened them to the towers of Babylon, and he describes the wall of the abyss to be crowned with towers like the castle of Montereggion. Amidst the darkness, he thought he saw "many a lofty tower," and he asked his guide, "What land is this?" His master replied: "These are not towers, but giants," who, "half their length uprearing," stand on the wall which is eleven miles in circuit. Dante recognizes the first giant, and his head appears "as doth the pine that tops St. Peter's." (Inf. 31.)

Let us bring all these points together, and see if there be more than one design in them. The trench round the well of the abyss has the same extent as the trench which encompasses Rome. The wall which surrounds the abyss, where Satan dwells, has the same circuit as the walls of Rome, where reigns the Pope; and the demon of avarice cries, "The Pope is Satan, the prince." The wicked Time, which pours its waters or people into the abyss, looks into Rome as into a mirror. The condemned, who cross the bridge which leads to the abyss, are compared to those who go to St. Peter's in Rome; on the wall are giants, who look like towers; and the head of the first is like the pine of St. Peter's at Rome.

And who is this giant? *It is Nimrod*, the builder of the tower of Babel. "Here is the terrible Nimrod, who built the towers of this new Babel," says Petrarch, speaking of the Roman court, which he sometimes called Hell, but more frequently Babylon; the confidential letters of this writer were always dated from the *double Babylon*,* he considering it as both earthly and infernal; and, in answer to a friend who expressed some surprise at his boldness, he wrote: "You are astonished at the manner in which I date my letters, and your surprise is very natural, as you always read—*from the Double Babylon*. Wonder no longer; for this corner of the earth has indeed its Babylon; the name of its founder is uncertain; but it is notorious that it has acquired its present name from its inhabitants. Here dwells the mighty Nimrod, who, rebellious against his Lord, raises high towers to Heaven; here is the shameless Semiramis (the woman of the Revelations), and Cerberus, and proud Minos." (Ep. 8.)

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* Hell and Babylon were written indifferently, because "Babylon the Great is become the habitation of devils." (Rev.) Therefore Petrarch wrote: "Come not to Babylon; descend not while living into hell." And again: "Once Rome, now Babylon, hell of the living."

Many writers and historians of the time spoke habitually of the Papal court in these terms;* and hence Dante placed the figure of the builder of the tower of Babel on the wall of the abyss, in order to show more pointedly what that abyss represented.

The colossus, whom he describes as pouring out the waters of hell, that is, the *Bad Time* personified, which produces the people who inhabit his hell, is an exact copy of the mysterious image seen by the king of Babylon in his dream, which the inspired Daniel interpreted to be a figure of the future destiny of that kingdom. As Landino justly remarks, we have only to compare the second chapter of Daniel with the following description of Dante's colossus, to perceive their similarity to each other: —

" ———— Of finest gold
His head is shap'd, pure silver are the breast
And arms; thence to the middle is of brass;
And downward, all beneath, well-tempered steel,
Save the right foot of potter's clay." (Inf. 14.)

This personified Time, which Dante thus took almost literally from Daniel, is the foundation stone towards the interpretation of his Inferno, as he tells us in the letter to Can Grande, which is explanatory of the poem: — "If those who are envious of me, and exclaim against the use of such elevated language, attributing it to a defect in the speaker, would only read Daniel, they would find that Nebuchadnezzar, by the divine will, saw many things against sinners (viz. the statue), which he afterwards forgot."

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* See the note D. at the end of the volume.

Dante, brought up in those sacred doctrines which all revere, had studied Isaiah very deeply; the most imaginative of poets delighted in the verses of the most sublime of prophets, and he often refers us to his great model for an explanation of the mysteries of his own *work.* "Isaiah saith that in their own land each one must be clad in two-fold vesture." (Par. 25.) Let us first hear, therefore, how and where Isaiah figures the king of Babylon, and then we shall see how and where Dante describes the head of *his* Babylon. "Take us this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say — How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Thou shalt be brought down *to hell, to the sides of the pit.*" (ch. 14.) And in this very place, viz. in the depths of the pit of abyss, did Dante place the king of Babylon, of whom he wrote: "The Pope is Satan the prince."

He studied and imitated Ezekiel too, as well as Isaiah; and refers us to him also for a solution of his own mysteries. Let us hear them together. Dante, in his paradise, which he places in the midst of the sea, describes the woman of the Revelations, and tells us that she was carried off thence on a monstrous car. Now, in the letter explanatory of his poem, he mentions (as it were, incidentally) that earthly paradise, and says that *Lucifer* was driven out of it; citing the testimony of Ezekiel. If we refer to that prophet, in order to see whom Dante called Lucifer, we shall find that it is the same as the Lucifer of Isaiah; and we shall perceive too, that the woman whom he describes as seated on the holy hill of God, in the heart of the sea, is also Lucifer himself. In the above mentioned letter, Dante writes thus of the earthly paradise: "Of whose delights Ezekiel speaks where he rebukes *Lucifer,*" &c. &c. In the chapter alluded to (the 28th), we read : " Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God : Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, *in the midst of the seas ;* yet thou art a *man.*—Thou hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures.—Thou hast been in *Eden, the garden of God.*—Thou wast upon the *holy mountain of God.*—Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities ; by the iniquity of thy traffic," &c. Here we have the very Lucifer of Dante, a prince corrupting and corrupted, who was seated in God's seat, and defiled his sanctuaries. And therefore he cited Ezekiel in his letter, and in his poem, said : " Read Ezekiel," (Purg. 29.) (and each time in reference to the earthly paradise, where he figures the woman of the Revelations), that we might convince ourselves, by a reference to that prophet, that the object described by him as a wicked prince, was the same as the Lucifer and the woman of his own poem.

Before we proceed to more substantial proofs, let us see the advantage that Dante derived from his acquaintance with these prophetic books, and their figurative language.

Petrarch described the Pope sometimes as a woman, sometimes as a man, and also as a female disguised as a man, according to the metaphor he employed. When he treated of Babylon, he made the *woman* its ruler ; when he described hell, he saw *Lucifer* on its throne.

Dante borrowed the most powerful of the colours which he employed in painting his great enemy, from Isaiah and St. John. The Lucifer of Babylon of the one, and the woman of Babylon of the other, were mixed up and blended into one person, and were used by the poet indifferently to describe the Pope. In various places of the Inferno, we read of him as " The emperor who sways the realm of sorrow ;" " Hell's monarch ;" " Queen of this realm," and " Queen of endless woe," &c. Nor did he disdain the aid of mythology on this point. In his letter to Can Grande he cites the Pagan doctrine of endowing deities with the qualities of both sexes;* and he gives us to understand that a Lucifer is both male and female, " one and the same," so is the figure opposed to him, which he calls, in the 6th canto of the Purgatory, " Highest Jove." Boccaccio considers the same theory in the Genealogy of the Gods. (B. 3. ch. 3.) †

But Dante did not confine himself to single names only, whether masculine or feminine, wherewith to identify the supreme ruler of the abyss. He selected from the pages of mythology, Hecate, the goddess of hell, as another representative of Lucifer, the prince. The fabulous Hecate had three faces; and the same number has the Lucifer of the poem. Knowing, as we all do, that Hecate is another name for Luna, or the moon, and that she is described with three faces, to represent the crescent, the full and the half moon, when we hear one of the condemned in the Inferno, thus speaking of fifty lunar months—

> But not yet fifty times shall be relumed
> Her aspect, who reigns here queen of this realm—(Canto 10.)

we must, of course, understand that the poet means *Hecate*, the queen of hell, the same whom he calls, " the queen of endless woe," (Inf. 9); who sits over the waters of Cocytus. But who does this queen figure? Dante himself will tell us, if we turn to Canto 19.

> Of *Shepherds* like to you, th' evangelist
> Was 'ware, *when her who sits upon the waves,*
> With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld.

Here, then, we have a triple personage, the woman, Hecate, and Lucifer; an extraordinary compound of scripture and mythology, male and female. Dante made use of the name of Hecate, or Luna, because "all writers in allegorical language teach that the moon is of either sex;"* because "Orpheus addressed the moon as a male or a female, indifferently;"† because, "among the Carians, a nation of Arabia, some believed that the moon was a female, and others called it by a masculine name;"‡ because, "in the mysteries of Isis, the moon was represented by a man dressed in female attire;"§ or because, "the Gentiles gave the name of Lucifera to the moon or Diana."‖ However this may be, the fact is indisputable, that the poet did consider this Lucifer of the Scriptures, and Lucifera of the heathen, as one and the same object, male and female together, and so addressed it in the work we are now examining.

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* See vol. v. p. 476 of the works of Dante, edit. of Zatta.

† See the note E. at the end of the volume.

In the figure which Dante copied from Ezekiel, although the prophet describes a man, and the poet a woman, still the resemblance is obvious. The prophet says, that he who sat in the seat of the Lord, and defiled his sanctuaries, had dwelt in the garden of God on the holy hill, in the midst of the seas; and the poet describes his female in paradise, on the holy hill, in the midst of the sea. In order to make us comprehend the real object meant, he says that Ezekiel spoke of *Lucifer;* and he identifies with the prophetic figure, his own Lucifer and woman, two in one. Was he ignorant then, of the fact, that Ezekiel denounced a wicked prince, by name? No; but by saying that that prince was Lucifer, he gave us to understand that his own Lucifer or woman, was intended for the portrait of an equally wicked prince.

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* Mars. Ficino. coment. sopra l'Amore o Convito di Platone. p.76. Flor. 1544.

† Riposo of Borghini at the beginning.

‡ Cartari. Imm. degli Dei. p. 550.

§ Lenoir. La Fr. Maçonn. p. 135.

‖ In every great national museum there are to be seen statutes of Diana Lucifera. See the collection of the Pio Clementino at Rome; the Borbonico of Naples, &c.

In canto 19, of the Inferno, the simoniacal popes are described to us, with their punishment. They are in a vault, with their heads downwards, and the soles of their feet burning with fire, and there they hang mid-way to the bottom, where the lake of Cocytus is yawning for them, and subject to this law: every new Pope who comes there, takes the place of his predecessor, who falls down below out of his stony sepulchre. And where does he go? Let us turn to chap. 14th of Isaiah, and there we shall not only see where he goes, but we shall fancy that we behold *Dante*, as he describes himself in the same canto, stooping down and intently gazing upon the wretched sinner:—"Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, how art thou fallen from Heaven, O *Lucifer*,—thou shalt be brought down to *hell*, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee, shall *narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee*, saying, Is this the man who made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms? But thou art cast out of thy grave." Here Dante's imitation is as clear as possible. Every wicked king of Babylon, by him placed in the bottomless sepulchre, when he falls down below into the infernal lake, becomes Lucifer, or a part of Lucifer—"Thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit: thou art cast out of thy grave." This is the lake, produced by the Babylonish Time, which pours its waters into the depths of that figurative Babylon which it looks into. "And at *Rome*, as at a mirror looks:" that Babylon, on whose wall stands the builder of the tower of Babel, with a head like tke pine of St. Peter's, at Rome: that Babylon, where the Pope is Satan, the prince; where Dante saw many high towers, like the towers of Rome,—whose trench is twenty-two miles round, and whose walls are eleven miles round, the exact dimensions of the trench and walls of Rome. And in making this Babylon a hell, Dante copied St. John,—"Babylon the great is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." (Rev. ch. 18, ver. 2); and indulged his hatred towards Rome at the same time.

Now, we shall have not the least difficulty in comprehending clearly his design in describing the popes who were guilty of simony, since we see that the three-faced Hecate represents the three-faced Satan, called by the poet, *the moon,** *queen of this realm;* that this infernal power was described as a male and female both; that Dante made it a Lucifer, falling into the lake of hell, in imitation of Isaiah; and a Babylonish woman seated upon the waters, in imitation of St. John; and finally, as we have proved by a multitude of striking allusions, that his Abyss is a figure of Papal Rome.

As we before said, he finds the last pope in hell, with his head downwards, ready to tumble from the bottomless sepulchre into the lake of Abyss, where the satanic power is seated on the waters; and, in the dialogue which ensues, he addresses him in the words we have already cited—"Of shepherds like to you," &c. The Pope answers from his tomb:—

——— Under my head are dragg'd
The rest, my predecessors in the guilt
Of simony. Stretch'd at their length they lie
Along an opening in the rock. 'Midst them
I also low shall fall.—(Canto 19.)

In another point, Dante clearly imitated the 14th chapter of Isaiah. He placed not only Nimrod, but other giants also, on the walls of the Babylonish abyss, where sits the monarch Lucifer; and those giants, when they saw him descending, were moved and troubled against him. The analytical commentary proves that these were different Guelphic princes, and describes them one by one. Isaiah's words are these:—" *Hell* from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at *thy coming;* it stirreth up the *dead* for thee, even all the *chief ones of the earth;* it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations."

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* We shall see shortly, that in the conventional language, the word *moon* signified either the Pope or the Papal Church.

We must now proceed to show, how the poet employed the imageries of scripture and mythology united, to paint, in his Satan, the formidable colossus of the Latin Church, one in three.

To elucidate the subject, we repeat the before-cited passage relating to the *woman;* which introduces us at once to the fact of her identity with the Beast of the Revelations; even so far, that the seven heads and ten horns of the beast are given to her by the poet, who says that she was born with the first, and derived her strength from the last:—

Of shepherds like to you, th' Evangelist
Was 'ware, when her, who sits upon the waves,
——————————— he beheld;
She who with seven heads tower'd at her birth,
And from ten horns her proof of glory drew.

Nothing can more strongly prove the true nature of Dante's Satan, than this quotation, taken from that Sacred Book on which the Protestant Church lays so much stress, and on which, in fact, Alighieri modelled his whole poem. Although hitherto disregarded, it is the principal guide to the interpretation of the Inferno, and therefore Dante exclaimed:—" John is with me."* Let us now open that holy book, and consider its 12th and 13th chapters.

The dragon having appeared in the world with seven heads and ten horns, behold two beasts ascend, the one from the sea, and the other from the earth. The Evangelist says that the dragon was Satan, and the last beast the false prophet; but he gives no name to the other: let us hear however their distinctive characteristics. The beast from the sea had the same number of heads and horns as Satan himself; and Satan gave to him his own power and authority: moreover, the false prophet, who had two horns like a lamb, and who spake as a dragon, caused all the inhabitants of the earth to worship the first beast, persecuting those who refused. All the divines of the reformed church, as well ancient as modern, suppose this beast to be the Antichrist; and as St. Paul, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (ch. 12) understood by Christ the whole body of the faithful; so by Antichrist they understand the whole body of false priests, and their followers — that is, the papal church, (according to them) the work and image of Satan.* It had several heads and horns, to express the multitude of its qualities, and it came out of the sea, because *the waters are people.* By the false prophet, writers generally understand the Popes, who feigning to put on Christ's humility, while they follow the doctrines of Satan (the horns of the Lamb and the tongue of the Dragon), persecute those who refuse to worship his image; and as, forgetful of heaven, and full of earthly passions, they aspire only to terrestrial power, the beast rose from the earth. Here, then, we have another triple alliance, in strict union together — the great dragon, and the two beasts; that is, Satan, the corrupted church, and the Pope; all three conspiring together with the same design in view, moved by the same spirit, and therefore inseparable one from the other; an infernal triumvirate, presented to us by the apostle as the sole cause of the misfortunes of the Christian world. Let us now turn for a moment from St. John to Dante.

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* Vasari and Baldinucci relate, that Dante directed his friend Giotto, in the composition of several frescoes, which illustrated different visions of the Apocalypse.

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* Thus an ancient Albigense manuscript of 1120, after calling the false priests of Rome "the false apostles," adds, "And such congregation taken together is called Antichrist." (See Jean Léger.)

The following vision appears to the poet in the Paradise of Joy (Purg. 32). He sees a divine car approaching, to which a voice from heaven cries, "Oh bark of mine!" (alluding to the bark of St. Peter.) The car is surrounded by the scriptural books, the sacraments, &c. to show that it figures Christ's church. It is enriched with the spoils of the empire, expressed by the feathers of an eagle; and as it moves along, Satan appears, and turns it into his own image, by the following means: — the earth opens between the wheels, and forth springs a *dragon*, who fixes his tail into the car, and infects it with his infernal poison. No sooner is this done, than it becomes immediately transformed into the beast with seven heads and ten horns, the image of the dragon, or Satan, who has thus corrupted it. The primitive church having become by this means *Antichrist*, next appears the woman of the Revelations, mounted on the beast, a figure of the false prophet, who governs the corrupted church. The text of Dante will confirm the accuracy of this slight sketch, and to that we refer our readers, rather than to any explanation given by his interpreters, who have in general strangely wrested his meaning.

Let us now return to St. John, and ask where this triumvirate has disappeared. He will tell us that they are gone where Dante placed them, and where he saw them — to the bottom of hell. "And the *devil* that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the *beast* and the *false prophet* are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." (Rev. ch. 20.) The only difference is, that Dante changed the lake of fire into one of water, to conform to Isaiah. The apostle saw them thus tormented together: "And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the *dragon*, and out of the mouth of the *beast*, and out of the mouth of the *false prophet*," (ch. 16, v. 13); and out of the three mouths of Dante's Satan, hang three unclean spirits. These three beings, who are inseparable in their unity of purpose, the poet united into one body, and made a monster with three faces; and by this device we never forget that, whether he speaks of the real Satan, or of the church he corrupted, or of the Pope his minister, the spirit, the idol, and the priest, are but one in three. A female — as the church; a male — as Satan and the Pope; "queen of endless woe," and "queen of this realm:" "the emperor who sways the realm of sorrow," and "hell's monarch."

The three spirits, who hang from the mouths of his Satan, are Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. The poet's reason for selecting those names has never yet been satisfactorily accounted for; but we have no hesitation in pronouncing it to have been this — he considered the Pope not only a betrayer and seller of Christ — "Where gainful merchandise is made of Christ throughout the livelong day," (Parad. 17), and for that reason put Judas into his centre mouth; but a traitor and rebel to Cæsar, and therefore placed Brutus and Cassius in the other two mouths; for the Pope, who was originally no more than Cæsar's vicar, became his enemy, and usurped the capital of his empire, and the supreme authority. His treason to Christ was not discovered by the world in general; hence the face of Judas is hidden — "He that hath his head within, and plies the feet without" (Inf. 34*); his treason to Cæsar was open and manifest, therefore Brutus and Cassius show their faces.

One more observation relating to this Satan will suffice for the present. He is described in the last canto of the Inferno; and in the last but one, immediately before mention is made of him, the following theory is explained by one of the condemned. The soul of one who had betrayed his own friends falls into hell, directly after the commission of the crime, and yet the body remains on earth, apparently alive, because a devil has entered into it, and taken the place of the soul that has fled. This is an idea entirely evangelical. "Then Satan entered into Judas," wrote St. Luke of him, the betrayer of his best friend, Christ, who, even while receiving the traitor's kiss, still spoke kindly to him: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Dante, who distributed his crimes and punishments in classes, made this chastisement to fall not only on Judas and those who were with him, but on the preceding class also.* But to make our explanations as clear as possible, we will here quote the last two verses of the thirty-third, and the first three of the thirty-fourth canto: the first speak of the traitor who betrayed his friend, according to the above-mentioned theory; the last show the arch-traitor himself in Cocytus.

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* The situation of Judas is the same as that of the Popes who were guilty of simony.

For his doings, even now in soul,
Is in Cocytus plunged, and yet doth seem
In body still alive upon the earth.—
"The banners of hell's monarch do come forth
Toward us; therefore look," so spake my guide,
"If thou discern him."

Now, the Pope being doubly a traitor, to Christ, and to Cæsar, the idea of the poet is clearly this: As soon as he mounts the papal throne, "that old serpent, who was called the Devil, and Satan," enters into him, and prompts him; while his soul falls into hell, Satan's kingdom. And remark the ingenious antithesis: Satan enters into every new Judas who appears on earth, and this Judas is the head of the real Rome; Judas enters every new Satan who falls into the abyss, and this Satan is the ruler of the figurative Rome. He who is called Pope on earth, is Satan himself governing his own church. He who appears Satan in the abyss, is the Pope himself, who becomes the viceroy of his master. The body of the Pope, with the spirit of Satan, on earth! the spirit of the Pope, in the form of Satan, in hell!

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* The two classes are, *Tolomea* from Ptolemy, who betrayed his illustrious friend Pompey; and *Giudecca*, from Judas, who betrayed his divine friend Christ.

Behold the visible reign of Lucifer on earth thus by poetical skill realised! behold the manifestation of Satan in the person of the Pope! This is the false prophet who clothes himself like the holy Lamb, and teaches the doctrines of the infernal dragon who prompts him — this is the second beast, who causes the first beast to be worshipped, and whose name is the number 666, contained in the Greek word *Lateinos*, Latin man, head of the Latin church — this is the priest of the false religion, called Antichrist. "The banners of the king are in sight," is sang of Christ, the King of Heaven; and "The banners of the king of hell are in sight," sang Dante of this Antichrist. The banner of the first is the cross; the standards of the last are the wings of Antichrist, which are likened to a windmill because it has the form of a cross.*

> "The vessel which thou saw'st the serpent break,
> Was and is not," (Purg. 33.)

writes Dante of the papal church, when it was transformed into the beast with seven heads and ten horns; and "The beast whom thou sawest was and is not," wrote St. John in the Revelations. These are only a few of the many allusions which all tend to the same design. The proofs to be drawn from them are so numerous, but so complicated at the same time, that there is a difficulty in selecting from them, without falling into errors of confusion, which indeed are almost inevitable.

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* In this verse, which some have considered profane, there is a stinging satire against popery. The protestants, averse to the worship of signs and images, believed that the adoration of the cross was the invention of Antichrist. The ancient iconoclasts, Claudius, bishop of Turin, and very probably Dante himself, among many others, were of the same opinion; and for that reason he compared the wings of the figurative Antichrist to a windmill, which has always the form of a cross.

But we may now begin to see what has prevented the allegory of this poem from being hitherto rightly explained. The extreme fear of the author made him obscure; the prudence of his interpreters made them silent. Very probably Dionisi, among the moderns, had some glimmering of light, when he wrote that the internal, mystical, and most valuable part of this work had not been discovered; that the secrets in it were neither few nor trifling; but that from their nature they could not be revealed. Were the ancient annotators then aware of the existence of such secrets? This will be examined by us in another place. The whole of our following chapter will be devoted to considerations on the most remarkable among their number.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE MOST ANCIENT OF DANTE'S COMMENTATORS.

It is well known to those who have studied Dante, that his first Commentator, known as the *anonymous* one, whose comment was always particularised as *the best*, was an intimate friend of the author whom he interpreted. His own words, in several parts of his glossary, indicate this. At the tenth canto of the Inferno, he writes: "I the writer heard Dante say, that poetry never seduced him into writing any thing but what he really meant," &c. He began to write his illustration so shortly after the death of Alighieri, that he calls the year 1323 (two years after Dante had departed this life) the *year just past*, (in a note to canto xiii. of the Inferno.) In whom, then, can we place implicit faith, if not in him? The importance of his work will be seen even from the scanty portion we shall now proceed to dwell on.

For a considerable period of time, there had been a close intimacy between the Courts of Paris and Rome; and the removal of the papal see from Italy to Provence helped to render that intimacy still more binding. Seven Frenchmen succeeded each other on the apostolic throne, reckoning from Clement V., who was made Pope by Philip the Fair; and it was that pontiff who transferred the holy see to Avignon, where it remained in exile (as it were) for the space of seventy years, the exact period during which lasted the slavery in Babylon. Most intimate was this connection in the time of Dante; and though it had for some time been severed, while Philip and Pope Boniface were disputing together, it was renewed more strictly than ever under the successor of Boniface, the before-mentioned Clement V., who, with Philip, was always considered as the head of the Guelphic party, the one always aiding and abetting the other in his views.

The Ghibelline bard describes this alliance at the beginning of the first, and the end of the second part of his poem, in two allegorical pictures, which correspond with each other. In the first he sees a lion "hunger-mad," and a she-wolf who "seemed full of all wants," coming forth together to attack him; in the other, he changes these animals into the *Giant* and the *Babylonish woman;* who mount the holy car which has been stolen from Beatrice. In the first picture, the she-wolf who appears with the lion, with many other animals is joined "in wedlock vile." In the second, this union of the *Giant* and the *Woman* is explicitly related. So very obvious is the meaning of this last allegorical idea, which explains the former one, that all the interpreters with one accord, recognise the *Pope* in the *Woman*, and the king of *France* in the *Giant*, who between them dragged the already corrupted church into the *wood*, the symbol of that place where the lion and the wolf had harassed the poet, in canto 1. Rome and France were so entirely bound together in their unity of purpose in most respects, that in that part of the Paradise where Dante describes the Imperial Eagle, which he calls the *Bird of God*, and exclaims:

> And let not, with his Guelphs, the new crown'd Charles *
> Assail it; but those talons hold in dread,
> Which from a lion of more lofty port,
> Have rent the casing. (Par. 6.)

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* Charles of Valois, Philip's brother.

This annotator says, "The author means thus: Whoever is opposed to the Emperor, fights against the will of God; such are those who bear on their arms the yellow lilies of the houses of France and La Pouille, (branches of the same dynasty,) and those also who call themselves partisans of the church." With these words, he expresses not only the unity of design between France and Rome, but between their followers also, who were ranged under their joint banners, to go forth to war against *the Bird of God.*

Now, let us see what were these Guelphic banners opposed to the Ghibelline standard, what was the Bird of the Devil which fought against the Bird of God. The annotator says, that it had *the large wings of a bat.* And here we entreat the attention of our readers to his words.

Dante descends into the lowest circle of the abyss, and there he beholds Lucifer. Virgil points him out thus:

> The banners of *Hell's Monarch* do come forth
> Toward us.

The interpreter says: "The banners of the *king of France* approach us." Now will any one tell us, or can any one seriously believe, that he would translate *the banners of hell's monarch* into the *banners of the king of France*, without some profound meaning? The king of France, one of the two chiefs of the Guelphic party, and the king of this allegorical hell, are hence one and the same object for Dante's friend! It is very easy to understand his meaning: although desirous of explaining to us that Lucifer was the Guelphic chief, two in one, he had not the courage to mention the name of that one who punished with the flames those who dared to call him the king of hell, and for that reason he chose to bring forward the name of the other who was, as we may say, his shadow. He thought that the union of the lion with the she-wolf, and of the giant with the woman, or in other words, the connection between the king of France and the Pope, was all that was required to assure Dante's readers of the real nature of the king of hell, although he had only named one part of him, and he expected too that that hymn of the Latin Church which he applied to the *king of France*, would naturally direct the attention of those readers to the supreme ruler of the church itself, and thus lead them to unite into one the two inseparable chiefs of the Guelphic party; hence he annotated: "Virgil, when he arrived at that point, cried to Dante: The banners of the *king of France* are in sight; therefore *look*, if thou *discern* him." Allegorically, the *eyes* are a symbol of the *understanding;* and *to look* signifies to *search into*; therefore Virgil's last words mean: Search with thy understanding into the sense of this allegorical figure; a warning kindly given to the attentive reader.

It is the custom, in allegorical writings, to heap meaning on meaning, and blend them into one and the same complicated figure. In this art, Dante excelled all others. We have already seen the triple apocalyptical elements of which his Lucifer is compounded; and now, in the same Lucifer, we shall see a union of the whole body of the corrupting Guelphism. Into three parties, it may be divided, viz.: the Roman court, the fountain of Guelphic principles; the court of France; and the Black party. The two last were the agents of their chief, and always joined to him. Each of these parties was distinguished by a characteristic colour. *Vermilion* was the colour of the papal party, as we learn from many writers, among whom we may cite Gio. Villani, and Fran. Sacchetti. The badge of the French party was the *lily*, a mixture of *white and yellow*, which is the arms of France; this flower, which has a white petal surrounding a yellow centre, was sometimes of gold and sometimes of silver; in the first instance Dante called it the *yellow lily*, in the last the *fleur de lis, the spotless flower*.

That *black* was the colour appropriated to the Guelphic faction which was known by that name, and by whom Dante was banished and condemned to death, will scarcely be questioned by those who are in the least aware of the stress laid upon names in this class of allegory. All this being decided: If Guelphism as a whole were to be reduced to one infernal power, that power would be triple like Hecate, and its three separate elements would be the papal court, France, and the Black or Guelphic faction. It would have three faces; one of *vermilion* in the centre, a second *half white half yellow* at its right; a third of *black* on its left, the last two adhering to the first. And let us look now at the portrait of the Emperor of the realm of sorrow, as drawn by Dante:

> ———— Oh, what a sight!
> How passing strange it seem'd, when I did spy
> Upon his head *three faces;* one in front
> Of hue *vermilion,* the other two with this
> Midway each shoulder join'd and at the crest;
> The right 'twixt *wan and yellow* seem'd; the left
> To look on, such as come from whence old Nile
> Stoops to the lowlands.

That is, *black* like the face of an African. And let us not fail to remark that the face *in front* was *vermilion*, and that the two others were *joined to it.* Elsewhere we shall see these three elements of Guelphism, which are here united together into one body, presented in another allegory disjoined.

What Dante calls *banners* are the three pairs of wings with which he furnished his symbolic Colossus; hence when his friend speaks of "the banners of the *king of France*," he only refers to the one pair of wings which is under the *wan and yellow face*, for Lucifer had three of these banners on his shoulders, which swept before his different faces. Thus was Clement V. described in those times: "On his back and before his face, stand up three banners."* The poet to make his allegory correspond with this picture exclaimed, "The banners of *hell's*

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* Chron. of F. Pipino. See Muratori, *Rer. Ital. Scrip.* v. 9. p. 752.

monarch do come forth." These allusions, manifest as they are, might have been paid most dearly for by him who framed them, and well he knew it; hence in the last canto, where he describes Lucifer's appearance, we read: "*With fear* I bid my strain record the marvel," &c., and his interpreter who shared his fears, had recourse to oblique explanations.

In the Fontanini manuscript, the first verse of canto 7 of the Inferno is written: "*Pape San Aleppe voces has congeminatas.*"* The Pope is called *the Holy Father* (Papa Santo,) and this word *Santo* is abbreviated into *San;* consequently this ancient latin manuscript shews that *Pape San* and *Pape Satan* were synonimously written. Had there been no secret meaning for so writing it, how could *Sutan* ever have been transformed into *San*? It is in vain that we search for any more open and candid explanation from these writers; we might as well question a mute; but if we know how to profit by the hints they threw out, we shall find them so intelligible, that all but the wilfully blind will easily perceive their tendency; and the anonymous interpreter of Dante will be to us one convincing example of this.

In the Sonnet "Fiamma del Ciel," Petrarch describes papal Babylon, and Beelzebub in the centre of her; Dante, in his picture of the Babylonish abyss, draws *Beelzebub* in the midst, (Inf. 24.) and why he gives that name to *Lucifer*, his annotator will inform us. Beelzebub is one of the many names given to Bel or Belus, the Babylonish deity; and therefore he remarks: "The king of Babylon, the husband of Semiramis, was the son of Nimrod, the builder of the tower of Babel, where the primitive language was confused and parted into seventy-two tongues; he made the idol Bel in honour of his father, and called it afterwards Beelzebub; so that Nimrod was called Bel and Beelzebub." Nimrod and Beelzebub then are *one*, with this difference: when described as the builder, *Nimrod* stands on the wall; when presented as the deity, *Beelzebub* is seated in the centre of the infernal Babylon. Many proofs and arguments will be deduced as we proceed, from the information we shall derive by considering the various figures under which one object was described. The interpreter, by means of this Beelzebub, the Babylonish idol, otherwise Nimrod, whose head is like the pine of St. Peter's in Rome, draws our attention to that city; and as the best way of informing us that the infernal deity was in reality a man who dwelt in *Rome*, he writes: "St. Isidore in his Etymology, B. 10. ch. 11. says: Those whom the Pagans declare to have been *Gods* were without any doubt *men;* thus in the dominions of the Latin king, *Faunus* was worshipped: and among the Romans, Romulus was a God." This note is written to explain the verse "Pape Satan Aleppe," and he thus proceeds; "To return to our subject; Plutus was the God of worldly riches; and the poet says that when Plutus saw *Reason*, (thus he calls Virgil,) guiding Human Nature (Dante), he marvelled greatly; and with an *indistinct* voice cried — Pape." (Inf. 7.) Other ancient interpreters will succeed in making this voice as *clear* as possible.

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* See the fac simile in the ediz. Bartol. of the Divine Comedy.

In the last canto, this Beelzebub of Babylon towers in the centre of the abyss, and the interpreter says that he is there "because, in the presumption of his pride, he rose against his Maker, and aspired to be equal to him; and of him Isaiah wrote: *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!* He seems indeed to verify the words of that prophet: *Hell from beneath is moved for thee.* (ch. 14.)" These are the tokens by which he insinuates to us that Dante's poem is a *parable*, his Hell a *Babylon*, and his Beelzebub or Lucifer, the *king of Babylon.* Of the personified time which pours its waters into Hell, the same interpreter thus writes: "This *image* is the same which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saw in his dream. That monarch sent for

Daniel who was then in prison, who having heard his question, said: O king, in thy dream thou sawest the image of an old man on a mountain, who turns his face *towards Rome*, &c., as the text has it." Most false! When did ever Daniel tell the king of Babylon, that the statue he dreamed of kept its face turned towards Rome, according to the text of Dante? The annotator goes on to explain the Colossus, in which the prophet saw a figure of the Babylonish kingdom. He describes the different materials of which the statue is formed, to mean so many ages, gradually degenerating from bad to worse; and when he comes to the right foot of the allegorical figure which rests on hell, he says: "This foot of potter's clay signifies the age in which the author lived, as will soon be shewn. The pastors of the church are so wedded to temporal gratifications that they have no thought but for themselves. The right foot therefore is the age in which those who are alive then will be so immersed in covetousness, that they will have no other end in view; and the author alludes to them in the first canto, when he speaks of those to whom the she-wolf is united in wedlock. He says, that she will continue in her course until that greyhound comes who will destroy her, by chasing her through every city, until he finally drives her back into hell again; and that he will be the salvation of that Italy for whom the Virgin Camilla died."

If we refer to his annotation on these verses of canto first, we read: "These words are spoken by Virgil, and they shew who is that she-wolf, and her condition; likewise how long her ravages are to last; who will put an end to them, and when. He says that there are many animals, that is, *men*, with whom the wolf is in strict alliance, and who are given to that vice, and that she will continue to keep them under her rule and dominion until some greyhound of great power shall chase her from land to land into hell; he says that this greyhound will be the salvation of that humbled Italy, *in which is Rome*, which was once the head of the world, and the seat of the empire. Here the author means us to understand that this wolf will govern the seventh age of the century; *six* ages have already passed, and the *present is the seventh*, and after this is gone, the first or golden age will return, of which he sings in the third part of his poem. He, in this, poetises the opinion of some philosophers who declare that the world is divided into ages, which are governed by the influence of the seven planets, the seventh age being governed by the *moon*, under whose influence this she-wolf is the queen over a people given to avarice; according to them, the revolution of the planets will take place in the eighth age, which will be in every respect like the first or golden times; and then will reign a prince like Saturn. The first age then was *gold*, pure and without a taint of vice; the seventh, (when the author lived) was the most depraved and the most remote from heaven; and the eighth, which is to succeed it, will be once more of gold, and will bring about a heavenly state of things; then will avarice be hunted down to hell. He says that this greyhound will be a universal ruler, the salvation and lifter up of Italy. Then follow the words of Virgil, which foretell the boundless empire which Rome is to enjoy." Dante in the Convito writes likewise: "Virgil agrees to this, when speaking in the person of God he says: To them (the Romans) I have set no limit of things nor time; I have given them an empire without end."

This part of the interpretation, over which the reader will probably cast no more than a few careless glances, contains a precious germ towards the final developement of all the subsequent allegories of the poem; and if by chance he should refer to it, after examining the rest of the volume, he will find how greatly its value is enhanced even in his own eyes. Returning to the Babylonish time, our annotator proceeds in his remarks: "This statue, under the form of an old man, signifies the course of Time; the fissures represent the imperfections and vices which break out in human nature, and they cause an overflow of tears, or impure waters, in other words *sinful souls* (the waters are people, Rev.); these form the three rivers, Acheron, Styx, and Phlegethon, which running through a marsh, fall into a lake called Cocytus, or *tears and groans*, which are the inheritance of every lost soul." And in the middle of Cocytus, stands fixed that Beelzebub, the Babylonish idol, otherwise Lucifer, King of Babylon, or the woman of Babylon, who rules over all the souls of sin, who are figured in the waters of vice, according to the poet, and his interpreter, and the apostle; 'The waters which thou sawest, are people and nations.'"

Landino, who evidently had taken this anonymous commentator as his authority, speaks of the figurative time in these terms: "Our misery and damnation are the fruits of our vices, and these make *our hell.* Dante poetically expresses this idea, under the *veil of allegory*, when he describes the statue which stands on mount Ida in Crete. He says that it is formed of various metals, and that it contains the *rivers of hell.* This is one proof of the wonderful ingenuity of Dante; he here imitates at once the statue seen by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Grecian fable of describing different ages under the figure of various metals, and introduces a *third meaning* which he accommodates *to his own opinions.* The statue stood before the King of Babylon, until a stone, which was cut out of a mountain without hands, smote its feet and crumbled it to pieces. This stone is *Christ*, who changes the fate of empires; but as it does not concern the present work, I shall not follow up this interpretation, but rather go back to our poet, who, with matchless art, unites the visionary statue of Nebuchadnezzar with the ages distinguished by the poets by different metals, and forms from them a third allegory reducing *fiction to truth.* The poet's design is, to fix the source of all the infernal streams (corrupt nations) in *tyrannical pride*, whence proceed all the other vices which lead to hell."

In this guise, Landino and the anonymous interpreter, go hand in hand in their desire to render the allegory of the Babylonish Time intelligible to us; Dante's contemporary and fellow-labourer Marsilio, the Paduan, beheld it without any disguise, a figure of the vicious court of Rome, and the stone which Landino transforms into *Christ*, he saw converted into a *mighty prince*, who was to overthrow the cause of all this depravity. We shall take a more favourable opportunity of observing how, in different ways they both express the self-same meaning.

Not unfrequently our interpreter substitutes silence for explanation; but the silence of him who is full of knowledge which he dares not unveil, is more expressive than the words of others. A mind so well informed as his, to whom Dante had most probably confided some of his most secret thoughts, can instruct even by a hint. In several places, he enjoins us to weigh well the words of the author, and though he sometimes appears to speak generally, we may profit by his words, by applying them to the particular passages under our eye at the moment. For instance, in that part where the poet, previous to the appearance of his triple Geryon, entreats his friends to penetrate his allegory, with an exclamation which seems addressed for some other purpose —

Ah! what caution must men use
With those who look not at the deed alone,
But spy into the thoughts with subtle skill, (Inf. 16.)

the annotator says, "These are *remarkable words*, because men ought always to study how to appear wise, and act sensibly, and particularly among those persons who have talent and wit, which induce them not merely to watch and acquaint themselves with the works of others, but to enquire, and examine, and enter into refined speculations as to the intention, and meaning of a man, in doing any given thing."

And again, "Poetry is not a science in which we expect to find the arguments as clear as they are important, still the present comedy is not imperfect, supposing even that it has no first principles; by a poetical licence, by metaphors and examples, it feigns one thing for another." (Proem. Par. 2.)

In many places, he refers the reader to the vision of St. John, to elucidate the sense of Dante, and elsewhere we shall most clearly perceive that the comedy is an imitation of the Apocalypse. Some of the quotations which he makes, hit upon the very truth, which later interpreters, either from ignorance or custom, have so much obscured. Thus, the dragon which comes up from the pit to corrupt the church, figured in the car of Beatrice, is by some interpreters declared to mean Mahomet; while the anonymous one boldly pronounces it to be Satan, and refers us to chap. xii. of the Revelations, after which he adds: "He shews the strength of the persecutor, who by his malign power, corrupted the very edifice of the church." Now if we consider well the words of Dante, we shall see that he, through whose malignity the nature of the church was transformed, was no other than the head of the church himself. So where Dante, in canto 16 of the Purgatory, attributes all the depravity of the church and of christianity to Rome, his interpreter annotates, "He inculpates more particularly the *pastor*, who ought to guide his flock in the right path; it is his duty to go before them; and if he fall from the cliffs, they will of a certainty follow him." Elsewhere, he makes the following remark on the verse in canto 16 of the Paradise:

> Had not the people which of all the world
> Degenerates most.

"He speaks with justice of *Rome* as the degenerate one, for her present fruits are the very opposite to her first produce." Again in canto 18, on the verses:

Therefore I pray the Sovran mind, ...
That he would look from whence the fog doth rise,
To vitiate thy beam.
Ye host of heaven, whose glory I survey!
O beg ye grace for those, that are on earth
All after ill example gone astray. —

he annotates, "Here he intimates that God is wroth with *the Pope and the cardinals*, for the flock of the land is led astray by the *bad example of its shepherd*, therefore he goes on to apostrophize that shepherd, saying: 'And thou, that writest but to cancel, think, that they who for the vineyard which thou wastest died, Peter and Paul live yet."

Again in a note to Par. 19, we read: "As it is declared in the first chapter of the Inferno; the subjects will follow their prince; he ought to be their rule for conduct, and their example, in justice and a good life; and if that example is bad, the copy will not long continue in integrity."

"By Constantine's gift, the popes were tempted with the enticing poison of human riches; they have become covetous and avaricious, and their fair aspect is transformed into *darkness* before the divine presence; but soon will come that messenger from heaven who is to slay the robber — and the end of the ninth canto of the Paradise accords with this: The cursed flower that hath made wander both the sheep and lambs, turning the shepherd to a wolf." Note to Paradise 27.

Have not these few quotations shown us who this interpreter meant by the infernal dragon, whom he calls the *persecutor* by whose malignity the edifice of the church is transformed? He writes no name it is true; but all those of intellect sound and entire, can understand him.

Sometimes he gives a strange and wrong interpretation, as a means of guiding us to the right one. For instance: he speaks of the third kind of traitors, whom the poet meets with immediately before Lucifer makes his appearance, viz: Branca Doria and his kinsman; and he says that that third species includes *churchmen* who have betrayed their benefactors. (proem to Inf. 18.) Now neither of those two were churchmen; but as we have before heard him call the figurative Lucifer by the name of the *King of France*, for the purpose of pointing out his *ally*, so here what he says of these two *laymen*, he means us to apply to the churchman, viz: that his soul is in Hell, while his body, prompted by Satan, seems alive on earth.

Sometimes he refers the student to a preceding explanation of the passages then under his hand; and those explanations, when sought after, are no where to be found; a convincing proof, as his editor justly observes, that they were suppressed, if not by himself, by others. At other times, he declares that a thing has a meaning, but that meaning is not told. And I am inclined to think, as the real sense of what he does not explain, would reveal the grand secret of the poet, that for that very reason he leaves it on the point of his pen. For instance: he says in his notes on the first canto, " Virgil, who appeared before the *eyes* of Dante, is a figure of *sound reason*, which came into *the eyes of his mind*, and this reason is a figure:" and after these words he leaves an hiatus, the only one we find in the whole canto. Virgil then is a figure of *sound reason*, and this *reason* is a figure of something unmentionable. When we examine minutely the allegorical character of the Mantuan bard as employed by Dante, we shall be convinced that this interpreter could not clearly reveal his nature, without betraying the secret which had been entrusted to him; and that he has therefore omitted it, that we might either search out the truth, or understand it without explanation.

We have no intention of entering into a full exposition of this ancient commentary; we are satisfied with having shown a fair sample of it, in order that, when we cite its authority hereafter, our readers may value and acknowledge its worth; and confess that those, which to them appear unknown truths, were not considered as such in the poet's own time. We only aspire to the ambition of bringing secrets into the light of day, and wresting from the grasp of a few, treasures which ought to be divided amongst all. These rich hoards of ancient coin, which are dug up from the caverns of the earth, are not acquired, but recovered wealth. They have long been in the possession of selfish misers; it is now high time that they should be divided among those who will give themselves the trouble to claim them, and circulate them freely among men. The age which coined them, left them for the use of its successor; they were subsequently long buried, and though now discovered, their full value will not as yet be appreciated. It would be too much to expect them to be taken as *genuine*, before the touchstone has been applied. *Omnia tempus habent.* But though perhaps those who shun the difficult task of enquiry may cast them away, and pronounce them base counterfeits; we firmly and fondly believe, that the day is approaching, when they will be snatched from undeserved neglect, and valued according to their rich merits.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE IMITATORS OF DANTE.

An examination of the works of those authors whose opinions were in unison with those of Dante, will shed a guiding ray over his studied darkness. Outwardly, they appear sometimes to differ from him, while in reality they might almost be deemed the echoes of his voice. Our researches will be productive of this sure result: that if we can rightly interpret throughout *one* of these works, we can understand all which proceeded from the same mysterious school; a school which, both in religion and in politics, influenced the literature of the whole of Europe; and whose pupils were innumerable, although their works, disguised as they are under manifold forms, have hitherto remained almost profitless in our hands. This will be the case no longer, if our expectations be fulfilled; for we hope to be able to explain the whole nature and aim of this secret society, in a manner which will clear every shadow of doubt from the subject.

As it would be impossible to recollect, and far more to name, the many writers who conformed to the secret doctrines of Dante, we shall in this chapter limit ourselves to two only; choosing those who form almost a connecting link between the age of Alighieri, and that of Luther; between the secret and the proclaimed Reform; between the veiled and open language of truth.

One of them wrote when the triumph of the Reformation was almost assured; and emboldened by its success, he informed the world, that he whom poets called *Dis* and *Plutus*, was the demon who occasioned all the misfortunes of the human race. And let us see if it be possible to misunderstand to whom those poets alluded.

"This is the same who is called by Christ and St. Paul, *the Prince of this World*, * and by our crowned poets, *Dis* and *Plutus*. If the care of the *Sheep* is committed to *Wolves*, if an impious hand now lays hold on the holy things of Christ, if an avaricious priest sells both heaven and hell, if we see asses wearing princes, diadems, if our temples are filled with sinners, if, in short, iniquities without number are committed every day with impunity, it is not the fault of the supreme Deity, but if this demon whom we poets call *Fortune* and *Plutus*, † and whom we might also most aptly call *Sarcotheus*, or God of Flesh. He is the cause of all discords, quarrels, strifes, battles, wars, deceit, frauds, conflagrations, slaughters; finally, whatever evils prevail, or wherever they appear, their origin is in this odious source, this *Prince of the Earth*; for the Demon who rules over the terrestrial orb, is an evil spirit, who delights in cruelty and tyranny. This Sarcotheus then, who reigns over the lower world, hates, persecutes, vexes ,oppresses, thwarts and torments all men, whose lofty souls lead them to despise carnal gratifications, and follow Virtue's ways in the cultivation of their talents. Thus do all insane and inhuman tyrants detest learned and just persons. This wicked Demon assails those, whose sublime intellect prompts them to seek to penetrate the mysteries of heaven and nature, because he is desirous of remaining himself unknown; were his real character once discovered, he would be detested by all, as the father of every crime, and the murderous destroyer of mankind; he would be pursued with curses well deserved; and branded with the epithets of madman, deceiver and betrayer.* He is the enemy and rival of God, by whom he was banished from heaven; and now he is chained down and bound between the moon and the lowest earth, where he has his kingdom.† Behold then, O unhappy mortals, behold the cause of all your misery, behold the source of your overwhelming misfortunes: this is your destroyer; this Sarcotheus, who torments you, and deceives the foolish ones with a false mask of virtue."

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* He alludes to the passages from St. Paul and St. John, applied by the Reformers to the Pope. See St. John' sGospel, ch. xvi. ver. 11, and the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessal. ch. ii. Petrarch alludes to the Pope in the same way: "The principality of Lucifer; thus the Prince of this world is called by the Verb."

† From this line we perceive that *Fortune* was another name given to the Pope.

These passages, taken from the eighth book of the *Zodiacus Vitæ* of Marcellus Palingenius, reveal the secret opinions of preceding ages. He recognizes the Pope as Lucifer, banished from heaven, reigning on the face of the earth, and causing all manner of evil; and so did Dante. If these lines offer a miniature of Dante's Geryon, those which we subjoin, (taken from the ninth book,) present a copy of his Lucifer; an immense colossus reigning in frozen regions, with large wings like a bat's; a body covered with shaggy hair, and a crest on his head with seven horns. "Satan which deceiveth the whole world, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." (Rev. chap. xii.)

"I saw a gigantic king, seated on a slender throne. A blazing diadem was on his head, his back was covered with two large wings like a bat's, and his body with long hairs. About him was a vast company, and a multitude of satellites. Such as I have described the king, was his people, for subjects never fail to imitate their prince, and to follow his example as far as they are able.* All that the terraqueous orb contains of most diabolical waits on this monarch's will. From him, as from a centre, springs every ill, as the rays depart from the sun. His forehead is decked with a bloody crest, and seven horns. Many are they who attend him, and well skilled are they in the hurling of arrows, and weapons of torture.† Then said my guide to me:‡ This man was once beautiful, and favoured in the sight of Jove; but his prosperity made him proud and wicked, and finally caused his ruin. In his foolishness, he desired to make himself equal with God, and aspired to share his lofty throne, and the result was, that he was banished from heaven, and assigned by the almighty command (executed by Michael,) a fixed boundary amid the darkness. Formerly, he was the bearer of light, and hence called *Lucifer;* now he is the lover of darkness, and takes delight in wandering about in the night-time, surrounded with phantoms and hobgoblins.§ With this chosen band, the wretched demon keeps himself and his kingdom secure: on this force he relies, and by such means he has subjected the whole earth to his power."||

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* "If Antichrist," says the ancient Valdense manuscript of 1120, "did not cover himself thus with his false ministers, he would be known and hated by every body."

† That is, he reigns on the face of the earth.

The author proceeds in this same style a great length; but we have quoted enough for our purpose, and need follow him no farther. The Pope recognized his own

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* Thus Dante of the wicked time, which looks at Rome as into a mirror.

† The inquisitors and their satellites.

‡ His guide and master, who instructs him as Virgil instructs Dante. Most of the allegorical poets had a guide of this nature, as Federico Frezzi, Fazio degli Uberti, &c. &c.

§ " This is not a city, it is the abode of phantoms and spirits, or to speak it briefly, The Hell of the Living.—*Petrarch.*

|| This work obtained a great celebrity from the moment of its appearance in the world, and subsequently went through several editions. The most profound critics have spoken of it in terms of eulogium; and particularly Gravina, in his " Ragion Poetica.

portrait, and persecuted the luckless artist who drew it so skilfully, and who with difficulty escaped out of the hands of his enemy. After death his body was burnt by the Pope's orders, and his ashes were given to the winds.

Now let us hear the other, who wrote his poem in Dante's age, who imitated, nay, often copied him in his imageries, verses, and expressions, and above all, in his internal meaning. He will probably appear to us even more tremendous in his satire; and when, after citing some specimens of his verses, we disclose his name, our readers will raise their hands and eyes in astonishment.

Book ii. chap. 1. Title, "How the goddess Pallas appears to the author, and describes to him the seat and the empire of Satan."

The author, like Dante and Palingenius, having asked the cause of all the evils which afflict mankind, the goddess tells him:

"The first and greatest cause is Satan, who governs *the mortal world and your kingdoms.** It is now some time since he came forth from hell, and let loose his fury on *this world,* in whose first clime he dwells with the giants.† One of his arms is larger than their bodies; but thou shalt see his face, and shalt hear him in his pride, boast of vanquishing heaven; he sits in triumph in the centre of the world ‡ with a sceptre in his hand like a monarch. He has made his city like the real Hell,§ and filled it with vice, death, and misery; but if thou art desirous of seeing it, thou must first descend into the depths below, and there having visited the first and second circles, and the afflicted souls, &c., thou shalt come back with me to *this world,* and behold all the kingdom of Satan, his great city, his high throne, and his people. Then wilt thou see as clearly as I now see, the cause of this world's degeneracy; think of *him* who guides it; and that thought alone will tell thee why it is so full of vice." The allegorical pilgrim then asks his guide how long it is since Satan left hell empty, and ascended into this world? Minerva answers him, that Envy descended into the abyss and drew forth Avarice, and with Avarice came Satan. This indicates, that Envy, by exciting the ecclesiastical against the political power, and by urging it on to usurpation and gain, perverted and corrupted it; the very idea of Dante on envy. (Inf. 1.) "Avarice, the root of all evil, drew him forth and brought him to this earth. Once out of his infernal abode, Satan took possession of this world, and established his throne in the midst of it—*Rome, the head of the world.*"

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* Prince of this world.

† The same giants so often introduced; Palingenius says: "The madmen built a tower towards the skies, higher than that of Nimrod."

‡ Rome, the head of the world.

§ "Once Rome, now Babylon, Hell of the Living."—Petr.

After this, they descend to the earth's centre, to visit the abyss: on their arrival, they find it almost vacant, Satan having left it, with his whole court, for the purpose of founding his visible kingdom on earth, which we have heard described, by Palingenius and others, supporters of the Albigense doctrine. It is evident that this author has only inverted the order of Dante's journey, in order to show us more plainly its real design. Let us accompany him on his pilgrimage, until he returns to this globe again, to witness the reign of his great enemy. "From the place left void by Satan," they begin gradually to ascend, and having arrived at the spot which corresponds with that part of Dante's Hell, where the giants stand on the wall of the abyss, having Satan for their centre, the author writes, that "Satan took away the great giants, when he went to the higher regions with all his vices."

Rising a little higher, they see the houses of the seven capital vices, "vast but *desolate, like the ancient ruins of Rome*," because all the seven had gone to settle on earth, and in the immediate vicinity of those ruins.

They continue to rise until chapter vi. the title of which is: "How the author, having left hell, arrived in the world, in the hemisphere of Satan." Passing over various allegorical pictures, we come to the river which divides the outward from the inward regions of hell. The travellers cross it in Charon's bark, which is plainly a figure of the course of life of whoever, on his entrance into this world, becomes a subject of Satan; for the souls who make the voyage with them, appear first infants, then children, and so on through the different stages of youth, maturity, old age, and decrepitude. Having disembarked, they enter the gate of hell, which is always open.

But before we proceed to an examination of the real nature of this empire of Satan on earth, we must premise that, from the consecutive scenes drawn by the author, it is very clear that his figurative pilgrimage takes place in Italy. Thus, where he sees the Furies leading on the Guelphs and Ghibellines to destroy each other in battle.

"I tremble and turn pale when I call to mind that a stream of blood flowed from those wretched beings, and formed a river wider than the Arno. Megæra led on the armies of Guelphs and Ghibellines against one another, and the plain was soon dyed with their blood. The river swelled, and then rushed the Furies into the ensanguined stream, and bathed themselves in delight. Oh, blinded Italy! why so furiously rent by intestine discord? That discord will be thy ruin!" Book 3. ch. 11. And he declares, like Dante, that these dissensions originated in the want of one supreme ruler to govern the whole land; the object sighed for by the imperialists and always frustrated by the Popes.

Into Italy then comes this new pilgrim, to behold the kingdom of Satan on earth. After passing through the infernal vestibule, he sees a female with *wings*, who transforms herself into various semblances, but there is nothing natural or true in any of them. They ask her name, and she replies, that her study is to *make black appear white*, "I am false opinion." "Behold," exclaims Minerva, "the real cause of the evils which afflict humanity."

We pass over the appearance of *Fortune* and *Death*, and other symbolic figures, and proceed to chapter xv. "How the author discovers the city of Dis in this world." "I saw the red city of Dis,* and it resembled the Dis of hell." They cross the river Phlegethon by a bridge, and being arrived at the opposite shore, Minerva cries, with a loud voice: "Open these gates to us, for we have descended into this dark region for the purpose of seeing Plutus, his temple, and his court." They answer: "You ask in vain; none enter here, but those who bring an offering, or money."

On the goddess assuring them that she has something better than money for them, Mammon, who is the principal leader there, causes the gates to be instantly flung open, and within them stands Circe, the *cursed sorceress*, who has the power of turning men into beasts and demons.

Dante in his Convito, Petrarch, and many others, have enlarged on this attribute of vice; and Boccaccio, in his Geneal. of the Gods (B 4, ch. 14.) says: "Homer, speaking of Circe, tells us that she loved Glaucus, a sea-god. By Glaucus I mean *Peter* the apostle; Glaucus before his transformation was a sea-god; and so was Peter a fisherman likewise," &c. &c. This is the Glaucus of the ninth eclogue, which appears written by a devout Catholic.†

For a little time, the pilgrim is fascinated by what he sees in this court, but Minerva gives him a mirror, and tells him to cover himself with her shield, while he gazes on their *real character*. "By these rhymes, reader, I swear to thee, that *one* of them was inwardly a *serpent*, and outwardly a pure *man*,‡ and another was like a ravenous wolf, and another was a *demon*, clothed as a *lamb*." Then appear the three Furies, in the form of women, who terrify the pilgrim by their threats and cries; and more especially when he hears them call upon the Gorgon to turn him into stone. The whole of this scene is evidently copied from the ninth canto of the Inferno, which we shall examine in the next chapter.

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* *Red* was the distinctive colour of the Guelphic or Papal party.

† Manni, Hist. of the Decam. p. 59.

‡ See Dante's Inf. the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th cantos.

In ch. 18, they arrive at the temple of Plutus, which is situated near a stormy sea,* and there they are required to worship the *God, (Mammon)*.† Plutus himself is seated on a throne, surrounded by Minos, Rhadamanthus, &c.; and the author describes the temple to be the very opposite to that founded by Christ,‡ and as being filled with avarice and cruelty. "Believe me, reader, that the idol Mammon was worshipped by Plutus and his court with more reverence than God. They knelt before him, and offered him the heart which was God's own due."

In this temple was Proserpine, the queen of Hell,§ who is described as seated over the waters, and bestriding a monstrous dragon—she is clothed in purple and quaffs blood from a sparkling cup. It does not require the aid of a telescope to recognize here, under another name, the woman of the Revelations, on whom we have already so largely expatiated. Dante, adhering to St. John, gives the beast who carried her, seven heads and ten horns;

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* "The waters are people."

† "Where God is despised, and Mammon worshipped," says Petrarch of the Papal court, in his 9th letter, *sine titulo*; and in the 8th he says: "One hope of salvation is held out, *gold*; gold can appease this stern monarch; gold can tame this monster; gold opens the way to Heaven; with gold Christ is sold."

‡ The Temple of Antichrist.

§ Proserpine, Hecate, or Luna. See at the end of B. 8 of the Zod. of Palingenius, the description of the demons descending from the moon to Rome. Cecco d'Ascoli, who was burned as a Patarin, taught astrologically that demons came down from the moon. The day of the moon was looked upon with abhorrence by the Albigenses or Patarins. (See Millot.) "The Mingrelians accuse the moon of causing all the misfortunes which happen to them; and in pursuance of this idea, they never do any thing on *Mondays*." Boullanger.

while his imitator describes it to have ten heads and seven horns. The idea is however precisely the same in both—on the ten Mosaical commandments were grafted the seven Catholic sacraments; but being corrupted, they all became members of that great beast called Antichrist, who is ridden by the *woman*, whose deeds we have already recorded.

As they continue on their way, Minerva and her follower come to a large stone gateway, on which are written these words :

> "In this great plain dwells Satan, proud and triumphant."

And then the author describes the Satan whom he beheld : "When I lifted up my eyes, I saw the victorious Satan, not as I had pictured him to myself, a monster, reigning in gloom, but triumphant and glorious, and of so grand and benign an aspect, that he seemed an object well worthy of reverence and homage. He wore *three crowns** on his head, and in his hand he carried his sceptre; and all around him were people who waited upon him and obeyed him cheerfully. The chief of these were giants †, who were served with pomp and splendour by ready courtiers. Then seeing all these things, I exclaimed : O Pallas! who is this? I would fain bend the knee to him, and worship him in his beauty and grandeur." Hearing him thus speak, the goddess desires him to take the glass again, and look at him in his real aspect; he obeys her, and beholds a dreadful change, particularly in the three crowns, which to his inexperienced eye had seemed so bright and beautiful. He describes him with sharp claws on his hands, the tail of a scorpion, ‡ and seated on a throne composed of ten dragons larger than whales.* — "I saw him rise up from his throne, and cry with a voice of defiance: In spite of thee, O God, I will ascend above the stars of Heaven; I will lay hold of the poles of the earth, and will snatch Heaven from thee."

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* He says also that he was three miles in height, corresponding with the three crowns, and with the triple composition, expressed by the three-faced Lucifer of Dante. He also gives him six wings, the same number given by Alighieri to his Lucifer.

† Alluding to those who surround the abyss of Dante's Hell. The Cardinals were always figured as giants, and called princes of the earth.

‡ A copy of Dante's Geryon.

This is a plain allusion to the 14th chapter of Isaiah, which speaks of the king of Babylon: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High," &c. Can we help then recognizing in these verses the Lucifer of Dante, surrounded by giants in the depth of the abyss? Can we fail to understand now, why the great statue, which is a figure of the Babylonish kingdom, which Rome looks at as into a mirror, sends the nations (waters) which it produces to that figurative Rome, which is the final haven for those waters or people? This author says, in plain terms, what that statue figures, and places it in the plain where stands the temple of Satan. "In that great plain I saw the statue which Nebuchadnezzar beheld, a figure of every worldly kingdom."

But to understand all his hidden meanings, we must copy the greatest part of the seventy-two cantos of his poem (this number probably relates to Daniel's seventy-two weeks), since every page teems with mystery. In several places he entreats his readers not to stop at the outward bark. "As the devout mind knows *how to interpret* the wheel of Ezekiel, and the seething-pot of Jeremiah, so *here* one thing is placed before thine eyes, and thy mind must understand that, in its *true sense*, it has a different signification. And as I cannot repeat *openly* what I saw, here my muse ceases her *hidden* lay."

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* The ten dragons on which Satan sits, correspond with the ten heads of the dragon which carries the goddess of Hell, Proserpine. And in imitation of Dante, Satan and Proserpine, although of different sexes, are the same.

How can it be that these things, which seem so evident and which are so very clear to our comprehension, both in this author and in Dante, besides numberless others, have never before been taken in their right sense? We shall show the reason, when we treat of the various means by them employed to deceive those who were unversed in their conventional language. The following may be cited as one of those means. This writer, after introducing Satan with his three crowns, his retinue, and all his emblems, adds, that he saw bands of demons preparing nets and snares of every kind, to entrap the unwary. The initiated read in plain characters, on the foreheads of these demons, *The Father Inquisitors;* and the very simplest of his readers would have suspected his meaning, had not their attention been drawn off by a false declaration. He asks Minerva, how he shall avoid their snares, and she tells him that, by keeping exactly in the middle, and swerving neither to the right nor the left (which describes the double language, which sustains equally one meaning or the other), he will be quite safe; but that, as much prudence and art is necessary, she has determined to put a curb in his mouth. This is no sooner done, than he is allowed to roam where he pleases, amidst the snares and traps. He sees many caught in them, and, among the rest, Gualterotto, the Pisan, who informs him that those hooks, snares, and nets, are all figures of the bad laws, and the frauds of the lawyers, of whom he here speaks for the first time. Very soon after this, he says, that the goddess Minerva drew the curb out of his mouth, so that, in point of fact, he only wore it while the means used by the devils to entrap the unguarded, were declared by him to signify bad laws and intrigues of lawyers; and, as soon as the inquisitors were transformed into jurisconsults, it was taken away, because Minerva's twofold object was attained. He had been restrained from declaring the true allegory, and he had deceived others by a false interpretation; and this he does constantly, but without at all leading the learned reader astray by his artifice, because it was understood to be a rule laid down by the school to which he belonged.

Happy were those who availed themselves of this talisman of Minerva ! Palingenius disdained it; and the Pope, not content with persecuting him so long as he lived, exercised his vengeance on his dead body; while he, who used it so skilfully, was raised to high ecclesiastical dignities. And we find that the finest edition of his poem (Foligno, 1725) is dedicated to a pope; and to a pope was dedicated a splendid edition of Dante; and to another, a copy of Barberini's "Documenti D'Amore," &c.

Thus, by a discreet use of this talisman, whose virtues we shall more minutely describe hereafter, these writers were enabled to dedicate the satire to its object, and to present before his Holiness, in homage, the very work which declared him to be Satan in person !

And who is the author of the poem we have just examined ? A reverênd Dominican, and very likely a father inquisitor also, Federico Frezzi, who was created Bishop of Foligno, his native country, by Boniface the Ninth ; and he wrote this work, which he called the *Quadriregio, or Decorso della Vita*, very soon after the death of Petrarch and Boccaccio. For the present, we have contented ourselves with quoting from those parts wherein he treats of the infernal regions; since the others, which describe a heaven on earth, will be better understood when our examinations have been more extended.

And, although we have many other similar works in store, which, perhaps, are even more confirmatory than these, of our particular theory, for the present we employ them not; reserving to ourselves the option of producing them, should necessity require their aid, in order to throw any additional light on the subjects we are now about to investigate.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE GRAND EPISODICAL SCENE OF DANTE'S INFERNO.

Having proved that the Inferno of Dante relates to the miserable state of Italy, at the period in which it was written, we come to the natural conclusion, that the partial and highly coloured scenes with which the poem is interspersed, must relate also to the affairs of that same period. The discovery of the writer's design in pourtraying those scenes, will much facilitate the task of explaining their meaning, on which we now enter, with an earnest desire to convince.

Dante's mystic pilgrimage was begun on Holy Thursday, in the year 1300, and completed in a few days, consequently, those whom he saw among the dead, must all have lived before that period. But as he continued the action of his poem throughout many subsequent years, he felt the absolute necessity of resorting to some means, by which he might be enabled to dwell on those political events, which followed the year 1300, in all of which his own interests were bound up, and which in point of fact, brought in their train the exciting causes to which we are indebted for the composition of the work. He panted to revenge himself on him who had made Italy a hell, and himself desolate; and he desired, at the same time, to give honour to him who would have made that country an earthly paradise, and all her good men happy; he appealed to the Muses, and they offered him the means of satisfying his twofold desire.

But how was it possible to speak of such things, and so boldly too, without incurring certain ruin? And how could he mention facts which happened after the year 1300, when his journey was confined to a few days in that very year? The Muses, exerting all their ingenuity for him, saved him from danger and anachronism, by inspiring him with the gifts of *prophecy* and *allegory*.

All that could be said safely, is foretold to him by the spirits whom he meets on his journey: and for this purpose, he introduces Ciacco, Farinata, Brunetto Latini, his ancestor Cacciaguida, and many others, whom he endows with the power of prophesying either mysteriously or openly, what was to happen after the year 1300; and what it would have been dangerous to express, he describes by allegorical figures, making the personages who were then living, and playing their parts on the stage of politics, either imaginary beings, or characters of remote times. Being made aware of this ingenious artifice, we shall, with the aid of history, understand a great part of that which has been hitherto unintelligible,— and when we see how he contrived to change the future into the present, explaining by the mystic scene of a vision which appeared to him in 1300, the political events which happened after that time, the meaning of his most abstruse mysteries will not fail to come upon our minds plainly and satisfactorily.

Observe then, that the events which occurred before the year 1300, to persons already deceased (as Francesca di Rimini, the Count Ugolino, Guido da Montefeltro, Adamo, Bocca degli Abbati, &c. &c.), are related to him by their spirits, when he meets them on his journey among the dead; and all that happened after that year is either prophesied by spirits endowed with that power, or else represented in allegorical scenes, which are designed and coloured with a masterly hand. One of these scenes we now proceed to interpret, selecting that particular one which refers to the most remarkable period of the poet's unhappy life, and the steps of criticism shall be preceded by the torch of history.

Dante, be it remembered, was banished for life, through the secret management of Rome, the iniquitous intervention of France, and the injustice of Florence herself. Boniface VIII. sent Charles of Valois to that republic as a pretended mediator between the Bianchi and the Neri, who then divided it; but that prince had no sooner entered the city, than, instructed by the Pope, and assisted by partisans within, he proscribed 600 of the white, or antipapal party, and left the government entirely in the hands of the blacks, or papalists. This is an historical fact which needs no comment.

Let us bear in mind, that Guelphic Rome is always figured by a wolf, the arms of Rome, in remembrance of the she-wolf, whom the ancients feigned to have been the nurse of Romulus and Remus; and that the princes of France are figured by a lion.

At the opening of the poem we read that Dante found himself in a dark wood, surrounded by a valley. He made many attempts to ascend a sunny hill, but found himself constantly opposed by three wild beasts. The first was a panther, "covered with a speckled skin," who, with light and swift motions, hovered about him, and not only impeded his ascent, but drove him back again into the valley several times. The gay coloured skin of this beast, however, inspired him with some cause for hope; when, suddenly, a lion, with erected mane, and a ravenous she-wolf, who "many a land hath made disconsolate ere now," made their appearance together. The wolf alarmed him more than either the lion or the panther, and made him give up all hope of ever mounting the hill. She ceased not to persecute him until she had succeeded in chasing him down into the dark valley, where he met Virgil, who offered him his protection. The bard of the Roman empire discoursed to the pilgrim on the malignant nature of the infernal beast, and invited him to follow his guidance, and see with his own eyes the kingdom whence she had come.

In these three animals are described the three Guelphic states, then confederated against the Ghibellines: avaricious Rome, proud France, and envious Florence (wolf, lion, and panther). Our present examination will be confined entirely to the last city.

The panther was an animal covered with *white* and *black* spots; and, in 1300, Florence was filled with the white and black parties. Black is the colour for mourning, and white for gaiety; and Dante, who was a white, says, that he saw cause for hope in the animal's gay skin. Envy was the vice which characterised Florence, according to the testimony of all her historians; it is the vice, as Erasmus declared, which is peculiar to republics; and Dante himself calls it "a city heaped with envy to the brim." (Inf. 6.) The panther, then, who obstructed him in his efforts to reach the top of the hill, is an emblem of the envy of his fellow-citizens, which never ceased to pursue him, while exercising the first offices in the state, until his ruin was effected.

France and Rome, at that time, possessed great influence in the Florentine councils, and hence pride, avarice, and envy, sister vices, became almost indigenous to the land, rendering the distracted republic a scene of discord and misery, which Dante has vividly described in Canto 6, of the Purgatory. Even the Guelphic writers lamented this state of things: "The misfortunes and dangers of our city have been brought on by many sins, by the pride, envy, and avarice of our citizens."—(G. Villani. B. 8. c. 68.) In the 15th of the Inferno, Brunetto Latini (Dante's master) calls the Florentines a covetous, envious, and proud people. And in the 6th, when Dante meets Ciacco among the gluttons, he asks him the cause of the dissensions which rent the city, and the answer is:

> "Avarice, envy, pride,
> Three fatal sparks, have set the hearts of all
> On fire."

Boccaccio, too, in his "Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine," where he speaks of Florence, says: "Whereas Tisiphone, sowing discords within her, has many a time prevented her happiness,—we shall now see whether burning envy, grasping avarice, and intolerable pride, which all reign in her at present, do not more effectually impede it." Thus was it in Dante's time! Those three sparks had increased to a conflagration, and Florence had become really a city of fire: hence Boccaccio not only placed Tisiphone there, and with her the sister Furies, but Vulcan also, with his fearful flames. And so, in after times, Machiavelli peopled the same city with demons, who confessed that for their pride they were banished from heaven.—"We were once blessed spirits; but, for our pride, we were banished from the highest heaven. In this city we have taken up our abode; for we find here more tribulation and confusion than in *hell.*" *

Thus was Florence oppressed, while the poet, who is now her pride and boast, was sent forth a solitary exile. Wherever he turned his footsteps, he beheld proofs of the desolation caused by the power of that man who was believed to be Satan himself; and who, from political ambition, opposed that salutary union which would have turned hell into paradise. Boccaccio, who declares that Dante, in his allegorical pilgrimage to the infernal regions, relates his own sad wanderings through Italy, writes, in another place, that the poet, in the city of Dis, describes the torments of those who, while on earth, showed no mercy towards their neighbour, nor love towards God.† Now this is not the fact; for Dante placed *heretics* in the city of Dis; and therefore Boccaccio, who well knew the poem, must have had some motive for this intentional mistake. We have no difficulty in discovering it. The hint thrown out by him, spoke volumes to those who remembered the decree issued by the Emperor Henry against the Florentines, when they shut the gates of the city against him and their fellow-citizens, his partisans, *without any feeling of mercy towards their neighbours,* or *love towards their God.* In this decree the Florentine Guelphs, who so acted, are called proud sons and heirs of Lucifer; obstinate children of pride; despisers of *Christ's* inheritance, which is peace; devoid of charity towards their neighbours.*

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* Ediz. de' Classici. Milan. v. 8. p. 407.

† See the Geneal. B. 8. art. *Plutus.*

Dante was in exile when Henry of Luxemburgh assumed the sceptre of the Roman empire; and when that monarch, like an angel from heaven,† prepared to visit Italy, with the intention of healing her wounds, and restoring the banished to their homes, a bright hope dawned again in the bosom of the unhappy wanderer. We shall hear how he rejoiced at the news; how he wrote to the emperor himself, and to all Italy, princes, republics, and people, trusting that his exile in *Babylon* was soon to be at an end, and that he should return in peace and joy to *Jerusalem.* We shall hear how he declared that he had been to meet the spouse of Italy and Rome in the company of Virgil, singing: "Already returns the virgin; the kingdom of Saturn is returning," as in the poem, he goes with Virgil to meet Beatrice in the earthly paradise, which he declares to be figured in the kingdom of Saturn. And, finally, we shall see that he adapted the Penitential Psalms to the circumstances of the time; and described the building of the New Jerusalem, and the return of all people to one supreme head.

The new Augustus was joyfully welcomed in most of the cities of Italy, and, at first, Florence was disposed to receive him in the like manner; but the *black,* or prevailing party, dreading the return of the exiled *whites,* fomented troubles and jealousies among the citizens; and their influence being all-powerful at that time, they succeeded in causing the gates of the city to be shut against him, and in rousing the bishop and all his clergy to a vigorous resistance. It is asserted that these discords were encouraged by the secret machinations of the Pope, who was seconded by the French king. The arrogance of the Florentines rose to such a pitch, that, when two envoys from the imperial army arrived, to treat for the recall of the exiles, they scarcely vouchsafed to listen to their proposals, but haughtily, and at once rejecting them, they ordered the ambassadors to be turned out of the city. Then, in order to delay Henry's progress, and gain time to fortify themselves, they instigated various cities in Lombardy to rebel against him; and, among others, Brescia, which accordingly displayed the Guelphic arms over its gates, and prepared for an obstinate resistance. Contrary to the advice of Dante, who wrote to him, earnestly entreating him not to remain in Lombardy, but to hasten on to Florence, the primary cause of the evil,* the emperor lingered before Brescia, which, after a long defence, capitulated at the last extremity, and was punished with the loss of the offending gates. After various delays, and much valuable time wasted, he marched into Tuscany; but his health was already impaired, and the poison of the malaria, which infected all the marshy places through which he had passed, was lingering in his blood. It was at this point of time, and as soon as Henry arrived in the environs of Florence, that Dante went to meet him and do him homage. On this side of the Arno stood the Castle dell' Ancisa, whose walls were crowned with lofty towers; and those who were stationed within the castle kept up a communication, by means of telegraphic signals, with others who were posted on the walls of the city. The emperor arrived at the castle in the night-time; and, having slain some hundreds of his enemies, and put the rest to flight, he crossed the river, and sat down before Florence. The rebels, who did not expect him so soon, were so panic-struck, that had he taken advantage of his success, and marched at once to the gates, he would have found them open and ill-guarded, and, in all probability, would have taken the city.* But, instead of carrying it by assault, he imprudently laid siege to it; and then, after some time, finding that it made an unexpected resistance, and that his own illness was increasing, he was compelled to retreat with his whole army, without being able to effect any entrance within its walls. In spite of all Dante's remonstrances, the rebellious Florence shewed plainly her determination to follow the guidance of the Wolf; and the unfortunate poet, becoming convinced of this, introduced, in the ninth canto of his Paradise, a spirit who tells him —

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* See the decree in vol. 10, of the Delizie degli eruditi Toscani.

† The expression used by the contemporary historian, Dino Compagni.

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* See Dante's letter to Henry.

> "Thy city, *plant*
> Of him, that on his Maker turn'd the back,
> And of whose envying so much woe hath sprung,
> Engenders and expands the cursed *flower*,
> That hath made wander both the sheep and lambs,
> Turning the *shepherd* to a *wolf*."

This plant did, indeed, yield flowers to Satan in abundance, in two senses — in *florins* and in *Florentines;* and, in every writer of that age, we shall find the word *fiore* (or flower) employed to express both a florin and a Florentine.† We shall soon read the description of the impetuous wind which carried off the *black* flowers from this plant of Lucifer's; and, when we have identified Florence devoted to the Pope, with this plant, we shall have established another convincing proof of the real name of the Lucifer and Satan.

We have now heard history, which is fully corroborated by the testimony of a multitude of contemporary writers; it remains for us to pass to an application of its facts, to the events related in the poem, and see whether Dante said truly or not, that he treated allegorically of *this hell.* By comparing the cantos, which we are about to examine, with the pages of history, the reader will be able to form his own judgment, and ascertain the truth.

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* See Gio. Vill. b. 9. ch. 46.

† The florin was called *fiore,* because there was a flower engraven on it; and the Florentines were so called, as being the sons of Flora. Therefore Dante called them white and black flowers: and, when the city was filled with Papalists or Neri, he called it the plant with black flowers, and the plant of Lucifer.

In the eighth canto of the Inferno, Dante, guided by Virgil, comes to the banks of the river Styx, which surrounds the city of Dis, as a moat surrounds a fortified town. From a castle, which stands on the outward bank, comes a signal, which is immediately answered by a corresponding one of fire from a tower on the walls of the city. A furious demon then rushes with the swiftness of an arrow towards Dante, and cries, as though he had been expecting his arrival: "Art thou arrived, fell spirit?" They enter the demon's boat, and soon approach the city, which is called the *city of fire,* and the *red city.** As they are crossing the marsh, which is crowded with contending spirits, one rushes forward, crying to Dante, "Who art thou, that thus comest ere thine hour?"† and the poet answered him, "Cursed spirit! I know thee well!" and he calls it the Florentine spirit, who "on himself turns his avenging fangs." Dante cursed this spirit, and Virgil thrust it away, praising his follower for the noble contempt he had expressed for it.

They then draw near to the trenches which surround this comfortless land, and find them crowned with *red towers.* The gates are guarded by more than a thousand devils, who, as soon as they see that Dante is alive, cry out, "Who is this, that without *death* first felt, goes through the regions of the *dead?*"

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* *Red,* the badge of Guelphism.

† Dante arrived in Tuscany before Henry, and thence wrote him the letter above-mentioned, entreating him to hasten there.

Virgil signifies his desire to speak with them in private; and they agree to this, provided he sends away his companion. Dante, in relating this, exclaims —

> ——— "Now, bethink thee, reader!
> What cheer was mine; at sound of those curs'd words,
> I *did believe I never should return.*"

Virgil goes to confer with the demons,* leaving his pupil in a state of suspense as to the ultimate result of the interview. But this uncertainty is soon at an end: after a few words have passed between them, the demons refuse to hear any thing further, and all together rush back into the city:

> ——— "Clos'd were the gates,
> By those our adversaries, on the breast
> Of my liege lord."

Virgil, divided between anger and contempt, consoles his dejected companion, telling him not to despair, for that, in spite of all the arts used within the city, he should finally conquer. He reminds him that their arrogance has been already proved at those gates which now stand without a bolt, and on whose arch stood forth the writing of the *dead.*† But that, to punish them, *one* (Tal) is already coming, for whom the gates of this infernal city will be thrown open.

At the beginning of canto 9, Dante, seeing how impatient Virgil appears for the arrival of that *one* (*Tal* or *Altri*,) whom he was expecting, asks him if any one ever descends into that gulf from the first circle. (In that circle he had met Electra and Æneas, with their descendant Cæsar.) While Virgil is answering his question, the three Furies appear, standing on a burning tower, stained with blood, and tearing and beating themselves, like the demons whom Dante had seen outside the city. Virgil points out the three: on the left stood Megæra; on the right Alecto; and Tisiphone in the midst.

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* "They assembled the grand council, according to the Florentine custom," says the Bishop of Butrinto, one of Henry's envoys. And again: "They bid us return whence we came. We desired to fulfil our mission, but they would not listen to us."

† "Henry, approaching Brescia, found the gates locked, and the walls covered with Guelphic banners." See Corio's History of Milan.

In these three females, we see the three odious passions which burned within the hearts of the Florentines — the three sparks which Vulcan fanned, until he set the whole city on fire. The first is Megara; this word, signifying *envy*, speaks for itself. Alecto, meaning *without peace*, describes the restless nature of *pride*. And Tisiphone, whom Boccaccio also placed in Florence, as the sower of dissension there, is called by poets the daughter of Avarice, (the characteristic vice of Rome), and she stands between the others, because Rome was supposed to have instigated and urged them on. *She* was the real cause of the tumults which filled the city with blood; and the word Tisiphone signifies *murder*. Virgil, who knew this, after he had uttered her name, held his peace. But let us remember, that these three furies express not only the three hateful passions, but the three wild beasts before described; Megara or envy, corresponding with the panther or Florence; Alecto or pride, with the lion or France; and Tisiphone or avarice, with the wolf or Rome. This triple alliance of furies or beasts, making Florence their haunt, drove out about 600 of the most distinguished of the imperial or white party. And, thus stript of its fairest ornaments, the garden of Lucifer contained nothing but black flowers, the most suitable tenants of its dark paths.

The three Furies with shrill voices cry out, "Hasten, Medusa, so to adamant him shall we change;" and Virgil recommends his pupil to close his eyes, that he may not see the Gorgon, and to keep his courage unsubdued, in spite of the threats of the Furies: a valuable lesson for those who desire to succeed against any powerful obstacle. In this place, the poet, to prepare the initiated for the interpretation of this scene, and to warn them of its great importance, exclaims with solemnity:

> "Ye of intellect
> Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd
> Under close texture of the mystic strain."

And now at last comes that one (Tal) whom Virgil had so anxiously been waiting for. A rushing, terrible sound comes over the troubled waters,

> "As if of a *wind*
> Impetuous, from conflicting vapours sprung,
> That 'gainst some forest driving all its might,
> Plucks off the *branches*, beats them down, and hurls
> Afar; ——— while beasts and shepherds fly."

This *wind*, which carries away the branches or *flowers*, signifies the emperor.* The wind which smites the forest and puts the wild beasts to flight, is a clear allusion to the dark wood, and the three allegorical beasts of the first canto; also to the three Furies, and the three passions which ruled in Florence; this city Dante calls a *forest*, in the fourteenth canto of the Purgatory: "Mark how he issues from the woeful wood." What a complication of figures! The shepherds who are dispersed by the wind, signify the bishop and priests of Florence, who had all taken up arms against the emperor.

Dante, who had closed his eyes, to prevent being turned to stone by the Gorgon, opens them again at Virgil's command, and sees all the demons of the infernal river, over which he had been ferried to the city, flying away in alarm; † and, precisely at the same moment, the Furies disappear, of whom we hear nothing more.

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* Dante calls the imperial warriors *winds*. The first, second, and third winds (see Paradise, canto iii.) are Frederick I., Henry, his son, and Frederick II., his grandson.

† "The disloyal multitude, panic-struck at the sight of the Emperor,

"As frogs
Before their foe the serpent, through the wave
Fly swiftly all, till on the ground each one
Lies on a heap; more than a thousand spirits
Destroyed, so saw I fleeing before one,
Who passed with unwet feet the Stygian sound."*

In the conventional jargon, the Florentines were called frogs; thus when Boccaccio was asked in confidence, the secret meaning of the word *frog*, which he used so frequently in his pastorals, he answered: † "By the word *Batrachos*, I explain the character of the *Florentines: Batrachos* in Greek, signifies *Rana* in latin:—Frogs are as noisy as they are cowardly." In the book which was Dante's model, we find these animals described as infernal spirits: "And I saw three unclean spirits like *frogs*, come out of the mouth of the dragon," &c. &c. (Rev. chap. xvi. ver. 13.) Not to delay the course of the present illustration, we need only here remark that, in four different places, the poet compares the Florentines to frogs. (See cantos 9, 22, 23, 32.)

He whose coming puts the spirits to flight, has a sceptre in his right hand, and with his left he wipes from his face the thick vapours of the Stygian marsh (an allusion probably to the malaria which affected the em-

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retreated, and hid themselves." Thus Ferreto Vicentino speaks of the enemies of Henry.

* "The Emperor arrived in such force at the passage, that, notwithstanding the Florentines, he succeeded in transporting his army over the river." Storie Pistolesi.

† "We are very loquacious, but in war we are worth nothing, and therefore called *Batrochos*." See Marnnis Hist. of the Decam. p. 59. In the ninth eclogue, Batrachos (Florence) says: "A faint-hearted multitude dwell in me," &c. &c. In the last chapter of the Acerba, Cecco d'Ascoli charges Dante with cowardice, in having written with so much mystery, while in the same lines he boasts of his own plainness of language. "Here we do not sing after the manner of the frogs, (the Florentines), neither does our song resemble the poet's, who feigns to imagine vain things. But here shines the light of nature, which gladdens the *mind* of the understanding; here is no dreaming of dark woods."

peror). Dante, on his appearance, says: "I perceived that he was sent from heaven." And, a messenger from heaven, was the emperor commonly called by the people, Uberto Folietta gives him this title; Dino Compagni calls him an angel of God, synonymous with messenger; and Dante, in the Purgatory, styles him the messenger of God, who is to slay the *woman.* The narrative proceeds;

"And to my guide
Turn'd me, who signal made, that I should stand
Quiet, and bend to him."

And historically, he went down to do homage to Henry, on his arrival in Tuscany, as we read in Pelli's Memoirs; and in the poet's own letter to that emperor, where he says: "I saw thee in thy graciousness, and heard thy mercy, when my hands touched thy feet."

"Ah me! how full
Of noble anger seem'd he.* To the gate
He came, and with his *wand* touch'd it, whereat
Open, without impediment it flew."

"If the Emperor had hastened to the gates, it is thought that he would have taken the city." Villani.—"Henry came, and encamped close to the gates of Florence." Aretino, Life of Dante.—"The Archbishop of Treves gave the imperial sceptre or wand into the hands of Count Henry of Luxemburg, who was valiant in war, and very prudent in civil government." Ciccarelli, Life of Henry VII.

"Outcasts of Heaven! O abject race, and scorn'd!"†
Began he, on the horrid grunsel standing,
"Whence doth this wild excess of insolence‡

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* "Henry was very much enraged against the Florentines." See Tiraboschi. Life of Dante.

† Machiavelli speaks of the demons whom he placed in Florence, that is, of the Florentines, proud sons of Lucifer, as, "All banished from high Heaven."

‡ "These sons of pride, led on by the spirit of evil, cried out that no man should receive our messengers." See the emperor's decree.

Lodge in you? wherefore kick you 'gainst that will;
Ne'er frustrate of its end."
This said, he turn'd back o'er the filthy way,
And syllable to us spake none; but wore
The semblance of a man by other care
Beset, and keenly press'd.

Henry did not enter Florence; neither does the Messenger from Heaven enter Dis. And his thoughts were doubtless engrossed by objects widely different from those before him, for while he was engaged in the siege, he was seized with an attack of the disorder, which ultimately put a period to his existence; and with him vanished all Dante's hopes of returning to his country, except in dreams; and a dream he declares his journey to the infernal regions to be, from the very moment he crosses the river Acheron.

I down dropp'd, as one with sudden slumber seized. (End of canto iii.)

"I pity all who are unhappy, but most I pity those, who languish in exile, and see their country *only in their dreams*." Vul. Elog. B. 11. ch. 6. In the Convito, he says that he dreamed not really, but cunningly, and at the commencement of his poetical dream he invokes the aid of the muses:

O Muses! O High Genius! now vouchsafe
Your aid. (Canto 2.)

The dream which more particularly concerns himself is this:

——————— Then we our steps
Toward that territory mov'd, secure,
After the hallow'd words. We, unoppos'd
There entered. (Canto 9.)

Henry was close to the gates of Florence, but certainly never opened them; Dante therefore, in the impetuous and successful attack of the messenger from Heaven on the gates of Dis, has described that first moment, when "the Florentines were so terrified and disheartened for two whole days, that, if the Emperor had attacked the gates, it is generally believed that he would have taken the city." (Villani.) This is the point in history from which the poet has made a trifling deviation.

With respect to the difficulty which may arise from the circumstance of Dante giving a description of his own entrance into Dis, while we know that he never did return to Florence, it appears to us so trifling, as scarcely to deserve the notice which we here take of it, in order to satisfy the most fastidious of our readers.

Is Dante's work a chronicle or a poem? Is it true, or is it a fiction that he descended alive into the kingdom of the dead? He assures us that his *Hell* is figurative of this world, and we read in it a series of mystic descriptions of the Babylonish time, and of his own affairs. Now, if the most important event of his life corresponded precisely with the poetic scene we have just examined, can we pronounce against this evident whole, merely because one small part deviates from the truth? We might as well say that Metastasio's Themistocles is not Themistocles, because the last scene of his drama differs from history, in making the Athenian live happy, instead of dying by poison. Shall we grant nothing to so rare a talent? Nothing to the fond hope of the poet, that although disappointed in his cherished expectations for the time, he might be recompensed by their fulfilment at some future period? But putting aside these questions, we say that the necessity of continuing his allegorical journey, *forced* him to take this licence, which is after all, perhaps the very least ever taken by a poet. He justifies it himself in the following words, which we shall do well to remember as a guide to other interpretations. "There are two ways in which we may be deceived with regard to the mystical sense; we may seek for mystery where there is none; or we may interpret it in a totally wrong sense. St. Augustine in his work on the city of God, says: It must not be supposed that every thing which is related as a fact in mystic writings, really has an inward meaning; for things which have no meaning at all, are intermixed with those which signify every thing. The land is ploughed by the coulter, but the other parts of the plough are necessary, to make the coulter act." (De Mon. B. 3.) Thus speaks Dante, and Boccaccio, who was perfectly versed in all arguments relating to the language of the school, says in a similar case: "That was put to ornament the fiction rather than for any reason; for, (as St. Augustine says in his city of God,) it must not be supposed that every thing mentioned as a fact, has a particular meaning. What has no meaning at all, is blended with the other parts. The chords of the lyre produce the sounds, but they require a frame to support them. Thus says Augustine."* These words shew the reasons which induced them to support the principal fiction with these additional images.

Let us forgive Dante then, for fancying that the event which he sighed for above every thing, did actually occur.

When Monti published his Aristodemus, the critics found fault with him, because he made the daughter remain on the stage, while she suspected that her father had left her in order to destroy himself. Monti replied very courteously, that the critics were right, but that he was not to blame for all that; because, had she followed her father, he would not have been able to kill himself, neither would he have been able to finish his tragedy, which he desired to do. And the same may we say of Dante. If he had not poetically entered Dis, because historically he did not enter Florence, his allegorical journey would have been at an end, and we should have had only nine cantos of his poem instead of a hundred; and moreover, should have lost many of those scenes full of meaning, which he covered with a veil of mystic rhyme for the use of those who could understand.

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* Geneal., B. 4, art. *Giants.*

But the best reason that can be assigned is his own; viz. that he feigned or dreamed that he had returned to his own country, while he was languishing in exile all the while, because the whole poem is a long dream. His imitator Fazio did the same thing, without incurring censure or reproach. The law, by which the Uberti were banished from Florence, was in force in Fazio's time, *who lived in exile;*[*] and yet in his allegorical journey, he says that he entered Florence.—"We arrived at the city of the Flower. There I saw many rich and grand sights, but none pleased me so well as the Baptistery, with its unequalled intaglios of marble. *After remaining there several days*, we departed." (Book 3. ch. 8.)

Poets have the privilege of personifying their thoughts, and of transporting themselves in dreams wheresoever those thoughts carry them. "My thought lifted me up," sang Petrarch, and it wafted him to the third heaven. In thought, Dante ascended to an allegorical heaven; and in thought he entered the allegorical Dis.

Having now established the identity of Dis with Florence, let us enter the infernal city, and see what it contains. Guido Cavalcanti, a celebrated Ghibelline, to express that the Florentines were allegorically *dead*, described their houses to be *tombs*, and Petrarch did the same;[†] Dante finds the city of Dis full of *tombs*, and the tombs full of *dead:* the first two who look out from one of them are two Florentines; and of two others, who are mentioned as being within,[‡] the one was a Florentine, and the other, by a whimsical interpretation, was said to have died in Florence.[§] These are the only four persons named.

Florence was divided between the Guelphs and the

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[*] Words of the annotator of the Dittamondo in the last Milan edit.

[†] See Nov. 9; day 6th of the Decam.; and see in Petrarch *Rerum Memor.* B. 11. art. *Dinus Florentinus.*

[‡] The Card. degli Ubaldini and Frederic II.

[§] See Gio. Villani, on the death of Frederic II.

Ghibellines; and the two Florentines who converse with Dante from the tomb are, one a Guelph, the other a Ghibelline. The poet, to shew the superiority of his own party over their adversaries, describes the Guelph as kneeling at the feet of the Ghibelline; the one weeping in fear, the other proud and lofty; the first falling backwards again into his tomb, and the last setting hell at defiance. But let us enquire why they are placed in Dis as heretics.

Dante describes the furies in that city as being stained with blood; he saw them tearing their flesh with their nails, and beating themselves, uttering, at the same time, loud cries. This is, to express the family dissensions, the intestine miseries, the civil wars, the dreadful tumults excited by the furies of his native city. And hence Tisiphone, the daughter of avarice, and meaning *murder*, was placed by Boccaccio in Florence, and by Dante in Dis, as the centre and instigator of the other furies, who are called in Italian *Erine*, from the Greek *eris*, strife or contention; and the question is, whether Dante did not derive the words *eresia* (heresy) and *eresiarchi* (heretics) from the same root. Are not these seeming heretics, in point of fact, real disputants, who, moved by the Florentine spirit, tore each other to pieces like wild beasts, and of whom Dante offered a figure, in the demons who were in the marsh which surrounds the city? Allegorically, they destroyed their own souls, by becoming papalists; literally, they destroyed their own bodies by constant warfares; and, therefore, these heretics or combatants "with the body make the spirit die;" this is the only crime charged upon them.

But Dante put some of his own party into hell, and made them, illustrious as they were, servants of Satan; and why not? He was himself an irreconcileable foe to the Pope and his party; and yet he was in hell as well as they, because this hell was *Italy*.

The supposed dead, as we before remarked, are merely the shadows of living persons; and both Guelphs and Ghibellines were equally under the dominion of Satan. How great was the number of those who were forced to live under his authority, while they detested him, as the cause of all their misfortunes and anarchy! They trembled, but could not escape; they abhorred that hell, but could not quit it; and for an instance, let us take the Ghibelline, whom Dante describes in Dis, who,

> " ——— His breast and forehead there
> Erecting, seem'd as in high scorn he held
> E'en hell. (Inf. 10.)"

Even before he sees Dante, he discovers, by his language, that he is *living;* and exclaims from his tomb—

> " O Tuscan! thou, who through the city of fire
> *Alive* art passing, so *discreet of speech*,*
> Here, please thee, stay awhile. Thy *utterance*
> Declares the place of thy nativity."

They then converse together in this language, the Ghibelline calling Lucifer " queen of this realm," in the signification of Luna, or Hecate; and Dante, in return, informing him that his friend Guido is still " to the *living* joined;" an expression which would have been devoid of all meaning in the literal sense of the word, but which conveyed important information in this jargon, in which *the living* signified the Ghibellines. But those who cannot be persuaded that Dante's hell is figurative of the then wretched state of Italy, under the influence of the popes, will always find a difficulty in reconciling to their own minds the idea that the condemned in that hell are not *really* so; but that, on the contrary, there are many there who were, in the mystic sense of the word, quite the reverse. Let us dwell a little on this point.

Three cantos prior to his arrival in Dis, Dante meets the Florentine Ciacco (canto 6.) and puts three questions to him, concerning their country. The real object of these questions has never yet been discovered; but it will become evident, when we see that the replies made to them exactly describe what Dante afterwards found, when he entered the infernal city. And this was the means by which the poet informed those who understood the conventional language, that the same city which in canto 6. is called Florence, in canto 9. is described as Dis.

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* Discreet or veiled; terms applied to the sectarian jargon.

Dante's first question was: What will become of the citizens of this divided city? The second was: What has caused the dissensions which now rend her? The first answer, which declares that the one party will be crushed, and the other uplifted, by *his* power (*Tal*) who was coming, we shall not discuss here, because it requires a full development. The second relates to the three furies, whose nature we have already analyzed. In canto 6. they are Pride, Envy, and Avarice, in Florence. In canto 9. they become Alecto, Megæra, and Tisiphone, in Dis. The third question and answer are as follows: "Are there any just ones in Florence?"—"The just are *two* in number." And how many Florentine Ghibellines does the poet find in Dis? two only: Farinata degli Uberti, and the Cardinal degli Ubaldini. Canto 6. says, that they were just men in Florence. Canto 9. calls them condemned heretics in Dis. Both lived in the time of Frederic II. and espoused his cause, and Frederic is there in the city with them. The poet placed all three in that figurative hell, where the Pope is Satan, the prince; because in reality they were there, and felt the weight of their oppressor's yoke, while dwelling among their enemies, the *dead* or *condemned*. Their ultimate fate was equally unfortunate: Farinata died in exile; the Cardinal was always distrusted by the popes; and Frederic II. closed a life of troubles and disappointments, by an unhappy death. But Dante, determined that his readers should not imagine for a moment that he considered Farinata or his companions deserving of the pains of the real hell, asks Ciacco: " Of Farinata and Tegghiajo say, they *who* so *well deserved*, Jacopo Rusticucci, and the others who *worked for good*, tell me where they are: for I desire anxiously to know whether they are blessed in heaven, or miserable in hell." The answer gives us to understand, that, although they abhorred the yoke of Satan, the prince, they were forced to live among the blackest souls of his worshippers, their misery aggravated by the horrid crimes of the tyrant who kept them there humbled and depressed.

We shall now conclude this chapter, after showing one more example of the ingenious deceptions with which he deceived his enemies, and vented his hatred against them.

Having seen Dis, he descended to the next circle, which is immediately under that infernal city; and there he met two of those countrymen whom he calls *so worthy* and *so intent on well-doing* (Tegghiajo and Rusticucci) and with them another spirit. Virgil commanded him to honour them, which he did accordingly. They then asked him in what state he had left Florence—" If *courtesy* and *valour*, as they wont, dwell in our city, or have vanished clean:" (canto 16.)* And he (mark, reader!) *lifting up his face*, cried aloud—

> " An upstart multitude and sudden gains,
> Pride and excess, *O Florence!* have in thee
> Engender'd, so that now in tears thou mourn'st!"

The three spirits, seeing him *look upward*, while he uttered this apostrophe, understood his answer *fully*, and gazed at each other; and then turning to him, they said—

" If at so little cost (that is, nothing but gazing upward, and calling Dis, *Florence*) thou satisfy others who question thee, O happy thou, gifted with words so apt to speak thy thought."

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* *Courtesy* and *valour* signify, in the conventional language, the political and religious object of the sect.

The last line was interpreted by some to be a compliment paid by Dante to his own eloquence, and lofty manner of expressing his ideas; but now we see that the compliment was not written for himself, but for Florence — and what a compliment!

Whatever trouble it may have already cost us to reveal the inward and real meaning of this secret language, we are very sensible that our task is not half accomplished. But, before we proceed to more important illustrations, we purpose offering a few reflexions on the language itself, which we are endeavouring to interpret.

CHAPTER IX.

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE SECRET SCHOOLS.

One of the means by which Dante succeeded in deceiving the world into the belief that his poem was *literal* was, by the fidelity and truth with which he touched on the events therein commemorated. For instance, when we read his vivid descriptions of the rivers of hell, of the various demons, as Charon, Minos, Cerberus and the Minotaur, &c., and of the many condemned of antiquity, as Semiramis, Capaneus, Mahomet, Simon Magus, and Nimrod, the builder of the Tower of Babel, we can hardly divest ourselves of the persuasion that he must be speaking seriously and literally of the hell of another world; and so he is, *literally*, as he explains in his own letter on the poem, but that literal version encloses an allegory, as the same letter goes on to declare. And if we think attentively of the devices practised by him and his contemporaries, to vent their hatred against their common oppressor, we shall perceive that the rivers, and the demons, and the damned all convey some allusion to the things and persons then living, in that Babylonish Time, when Lucifer's kingdom was on earth. Did not Petrarch, in fancy, behold all the rivers of Hell surrounding the Papal Court? and let us pause for a moment at this author's name, and see how exactly his opinions coincided with those of Alighieri.

In the philosophical work entitled, "De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ," we find him declaring that a wicked prince is really and truly a demon, and that all those who administer to his iniquities are demons as wicked as himself; and, in three letters in which he speaks of the Babylonish Hell and its devils, we read such sentences as the following: "Some are of opinion, that men become demons, whenever they are so constantly in the habit of sinning, that they take a delight in the commission of crimes; and certainly, those who are not only wicked, but obstinate in their wickedness, are in all respects as bad as demons." "Babylon the great is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils. (Rev.) And truly, thou art became so, O Babylon! for in what respect is a lost and wicked sinner better than a devil? Thou art become a receptacle, and a kingdom of devils, who reign in thee under a human form." "All that was ever said of the Egyptian or the Assyrian Babylon, or of Avernus, or of Tartarus, or of the sulphureous marshes, compared to this Tartarus, is a mere fable. Here dwells the fearful Nimrod, the builder of the towers of this new Babylon,— and the infamous Semiramis,—and the devouring Cerberus,— finally, all that is confused, dark and dreadful, is here collected and brought together. This is not a city, it is a haunt of wild spirits and goblins, a very sink of wickedness and impurity, — *the hell of the living*." Epis. 7 sine tit.

In another letter, he describes the place of his abode to be "A scene of fraud, — a den of infamy, — a kingdom of devils,—the principality of *Lucifer*, as the *prince of this world*, was called by the Eternal Word; * Alive with demons, but though living *dead*; † *the hell of the living*."‡

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* These words, applied to Satan by our Blessed Lord, were generally supposed to signify the Pope, who was in possession of so vast power over the Christain world.

† Life and Death signify the state of Antipopery and Popery.

‡ Can any thing be stronger than these expressions? A Catholic

Here we see in Petrarch's Infernal Kingdom, Lucifer the prince, surrounded by the very same court of devils who people Dante's Hell, where the Pope is Satan the prince. And in the canzone, "O Patria degna," of Alighieri, we read that the Mahomet, and Capaneus, and Simon Magus, who were in hell, were to be seen also in papal Florence. Again, if we turn to his letter to the Emperor, we shall see that the Myrrha of his hell figures the connexion existing between Florence and the Holy Father. "How! dost thou not know *Florence?* She is the wretched and infamous Myrrha!"

We have before mentioned, that these writers were in the habit of confusing the reader, by separating the events which depend on each other; so that it requires the greatest attention and tenacity of memory, to unite them together again. For instance, it is in the letter explanatory of the poem, that Dante says that he treats allegorically of *this hell*, where man is a traveller. The Convito declares, the wicked to be *dead* men, and the Purgatory, (can. 16.) shews that *Rome*, by her bad example, had made the Time wicked. Canto 14 of the Inferno, describes this wicked Time, which looks into *Rome*, as into a mirror, and pours its waters round *Satan*. In Canto 31, we see the builder of the tower of *Babel* on the wall of the Abyss,

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author writes that Petrarch has said a mere nothing. "Some writers charge him with having excited the innovators, to humble and destroy the Pontifical authority, by his letters and pastorals, and his three famous Sonnets, which half mysteriously, and half openly, publish and aggravate the vices of Rome; but it only requires to turn to what I have related of Avignon, to see how *weak* were his accusations, and how *unjust* those made against him; and Petrarch may well be pardoned, if, moved by holy zeal and love for his fellow-creatures, he spared not the lash of censure, when speaking of the purple assembly." Baldelli, Life of Petr. p. 151. A recent French work, "Musée des Protestans célèbres, &c. Paris, 1822," places Dante and Petrarch at the head of the first reformers; and the before-mentioned antipapal work, "Advice given to Italy, 1586," gives them the same rank, and with justice raises Boccaccio to a level with them.

where *Satan* is. In canto 7, the demon of avarice cries: *The Pope is Satan the Prince.* And in two others, the 29th and 30th, he fixes the dimensions of the trench, and of the wall of the Abyss, where *Satan* reigns, and makes them agree exactly with the trench and walls of *Rome*, the Pope's seat. And all these rays dispersed about, with many others which may have escaped our observation, must be brought to meet in one central point!

Again, we must not forget that, in this language, words are used in a sense quite at variance with their literal acceptation; for instance: in the Inferno, without the assistance of the conventional vocabulary, how could we know that *Lucifer*, the *demons*, the *damned*, and the *dead*, signify beings very different from those to whom men generally apply these words, and that the poem, which appears founded on the Catholic or Papal faith, is in point of fact a violent satire upon it? But when once we are in possession of the key which unlocks this jargon, we are at no loss to understand what Dante means, by saying that he descended *alive* into the kingdom of the *dead*, to see that Rome where "the Pope is Satan."

The writers of this school did not forget the old trick which was practised by the oracles, viz: Amphibology; and Matthew Paris cites one instance which happened in his time, during the pontificate of Gregory the Ninth. He relates that in the year 1240, an Englishman of very moral and religious habits, was observed to avoid with great care, entering the churches, which naturally attracted the notice of many persons. He was soon apprehended, and taken before the Pope's legate at Cambridge, where, being questioned as to his reasons for this conduct, he said boldly: "Gregory is not the Pope, nor the head of the church, but another is the head of the church,[*] *the*

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[*] Hereafter we shall shew that the secret church had a head of its own. Ivan of Narbonne found in the association of the Italian Patarini, established churches and bishops.

Devil is unloosed, the heretical Pope." If a viz: be put between the two last named objects, we shall see that they signify one and the same person, "The Devil is unloosed, that is, the heretical Pope." The idea of this, was to shew the unloosing of Satan, and his manifestation in the person of the Pope, the prevailing belief of the time. But the sentence as it stands in the original, would be read at first sight, "The Devil is unloosed, the Pope is a heretic," which would not convey the real meaning of the speaker. This is the art which Dante made available on so many occasions. In the Paradise, he puts the following severe reproaches against the Pope into the mouth of St. Peter:

> "My place
> *He* who usurps on earth, (my place, aye, mine,
> Which in the presence of the Son of God
> Is void) the same hath made my cemetery
> A common sewer of puddle and of blood:
> The more below *his* triumph, who from hence,
> Malignant fell." (canto 27.)

Is there any connexion here between the Pope and Lucifer? Do they not appear quite distinct from each other? Certainly; and Dante's fear made this apparent independence; but his hatred made him connect the *he* of the second line with the *his* of the sixth, and thus he meant to say: The wicked usurper of my place, who fell from on high, is appeased (or triumphs) below. If we omit the last clause (who from hence, &c.) the meaning will be still more clear, because let us reflect that, according to the Romish doctrine, how could Lucifer be appeased with the blood of heretics, who taught his doctrines? The sense is too obvious to admit of a doubt: The *Pope* was the usurper whom that blood appeased, which he caused to flow in torrents, in order to save his own tottering power.

The instances are innumerable, in which Dante made his words bear a double meaning, to suit either friends or foes. When he wrote: "*Lo capo* reo, lo *mondo* torce dal dritto cammino," he left the explanation of the phrase *arbitrary*, the nominative and objective being both before the verb. The Guelphs read it: lo mondo torce lo capo reo: taking *capo* in the physical sense of *head*; the Ghibellines on the other hand construed it: Lo capo reo (the wicked prince, "The prince of this world,") torce lo mondo. And thus the writer expressed his feelings in security. What, in our days, would be considered a vice in composition, was by him sought for and employed on all occasions; and he was so constant to this art, that even on his death-bed he did not forget it, as his own solemn confession will prove.

So far did he carry this, that sometimes when his abuse of the Pope is more severe than usual, he would almost persuade an ordinary reader, that he was his warm partizan and adherent. For instance: In canto 2. of the Inferno, he refuses to follow Virgil any farther, asserting that Rome and its Empire were created and prepared by God, for the purpose of serving as the established seat of the Highest Peter; who is above all authority, even that of the Emperor; and that the victory of Eneas in Latium was gained to secure the establishment of the papal mantle. Now, how could he reconcile these opinions with his life and writings? In this manner: The sun, the emblem of Reason sinks. "Now was the day departing," and then he holds that discourse; to signify that such opinions could only be entertained in the absence of reason. He concludes his speech thus:

Se' savio, e intendi *me*, ch' io non ragiono:

Here the *me* has a double meaning; it is the abbreviation of *meglio*, and the accusative of *io*; in the first sense it was intended for the Guelphs. "Thou art wise, and canst understand *better* than I can speak;" in the second, it was meant for the Ghibellines, "Thou art wise, and canst understand that I do not reason rightly." On such minutiæ sometimes depends the sense of a whole passage; and often too, while the literal subject is treated of at large, the allegorical or real one is contracted and veiled.

We find this acknowledged in Dante's letter to Can Grande: "The subject of the work taken *literally* is, The state of souls after death, *not contracted*, but openly expressed; but the *allegorical* subject *is man*, who deserving, according to the actions of his free-will, either reward or punishment, is judged by them; and this is the subject which *is contracted*," &c. &c. The words *is man*, fully explain his meaning, inasmuch as they tell us that the poem treats of *this* world, and not of the other; of *man*, and not of the *spirit* of man, by him very clearly distinguished from each other; therefore: "Now not man; man once I was," says his guide Virgil. The result of this argument shews that, as the poet treats of this world, the allegorical Lucifer and his opposite are *men* and not spirits.

Another mode of deceiving the many was, by giving a false interpretation of preceding passages. The following is an instance: — Piero delle Vigne was the chancellor and chief counsellor of the Emperor Frederic II. during his long warfare with the Pope. Some historians assert that he afterwards suffered himself to be bribed by the enemy, and became a traitor to his master; while others declare, that some of the courtiers who were in the pay of Rome, insinuated this base suspicion into the emperor's mind, at the instigation of the Papal court, and for the purpose of ruining the faithful minister. Dante introduces his spirit, who says to him: "I swear that I never broke faith to my honoured master. That *woman*, whose eyes were never turned away from his cabinet — she, who is *death*, and the vice of courts, kindled men's hearts against me, and they persuaded Augustus to treat me with anger which I, just as I was, deserved not." There is no doubt who this *woman* was, that ruined the innocent Chancellor; but further on, Dante speaks of *Envy*, and with so much ingenuity, that he would induce any one to believe that it was one and the same person as the woman, and between the two the Pope was never thought of. (See Inf. c. 13.) No annotator has given any satisfactory reason why Envy, which has nothing seducing about it, should be identified with the *woman;* and yet, without one valid argument to support their theory, they have all done so.

The false declaration, by which the reader's attention is allured away from the truth, has been already mentioned as one of the deceptions of these writers. Bishop Frezzi employed it in his Quadriregio, when he transformed the hooks, snares and nets, of Satan's ministers, into the fraudulent practices of the lawyers. But, in spite of all these directing hints, until long use has made the reader familiar with this style of writing, the outward meaning will draw his mind away from the hidden allegory; appearances will make him forget realities.

The number of the artifices resorted to by these authors, prove most forcibly the calamities of the time, and the extent of the fears which so fettered their pens. Their great object was to render the truth as obscure as possible; and, as Boccaccio expressed it, "Not to lay bare the things which are covered with a veil, but, on the contrary, to conceal them with all possible care from the gaze of the vulgar." "None but the ignorant will say that poets write *simple* fables, which contain nothing beyond the outward meaning." And then he brings forward the instance of Dante's poem, and Petrarch's eclogues and his own, whose meaning he was aware of, but judged it prudent to conceal. And wherefore?—Because those famed logicians, the Reverend Father Inquisitors, used arguments warm, fiery and irresistible, wherewith to persuade men; and Dante, who was equally convinced of their power and efficacy, endeavoured to invest himself with the armour of skill, and succeeded in making it impervious.

As we have shewn some of the means employed to mislead the general reader, so we shall endeavour to explain a few of those which led the initiated to the truth; but this will be better done when we treat of the language itself. At present, we shall only present a few scattered examples.

One effectual means of indicating where lies the secret essence was, by comparing the feigned object with the true, or with something relating to it. Thus in Dante, the infernal spirits who pass over the first of the bridges which lead to the abyss, are compared to those who cross the bridge of St. Angelo in Rome, and go to St. Peter's, in the year of the Jubilee. And on the bridges themselves, which end in the abyss, we see the builder of the tower of Babel, whose head is like the pine of St. Peter's at Rome.

Boccaccio offers us similar instances. In his commentary on the poem, he identifies Dis with Florence, in the following manner. The episode of the infernal city commences at the eighth canto, and, in his explanatory notes on that canto, he raises a ridiculous and untenable argument whether the seven preceding cantos were not written before the poet's exile from Florence. He brings forward facts and witnesses (but all dead ones) to prove that such was the case; and then he himself throws discredit on the opinion, by citing a passage from canto 6., where the poet speaks of his own exile with distinct details; and from that he draws the conclusion, that they could not have been written, before Dante had the least suspicion of his approaching fate. Nothing could be more absurd than the idea which Boccaccio first pretended to support, and afterwards ridiculed. Why, then, did he advance it? — To awaken the minds of his own sect to this fact: that the subjects of the poem are Dante, exiled from Florence; and Florence, who exiled him: and, with this thread put into their hands, they easily guided themselves through the mazes of the labyrinth, especially at that period, when the events, not having long happened, were still fresh in the memories of men. Dante's life, written by Boccaccio, is all in this conventional language, and hence it has been considered by many in the light of a romance; but those who are able to penetrate the subtleties of that language, know that it is the true and secret biography of the poet, and far superior to those others which affect to decry it.

In order to bring forward the secret meaning, it was a very common practice to desire the particular attention of the reader to the thing described; such is Dante's apostrophe to those "of intellect sound and entire," &c. Whenever we meet with similar hints, we may conclude with the greatest certainty, that there is some good reason why we should thus be invited to meditate and search. When the "fell monster" Geryon ascends from the abyss, the poet exclaims, "By these notes, reader, I swear to thee that I spied," &c. follow up the sense, and the real nature of this demon who wore the semblance of a just man, will soon appear. Again, where he announces the coming of the three-faced Lucifer, and sees the banners of the king of hell, he exclaims: "How frozen and how faint I then became, ask me not, reader! for I write it not. Think thyself, if quick conception work in thee. *Mark now* how great that whole must be," &c. The words, *mark now*, point out that that whole of *three elements*, which we have already analysed, was under the eyes of all who dwelt in Italy at that period.

It was very customary also to quote for some feigned object, in order to enlighten the mind as to the real one. The reader refers to the passage cited, and, in what precedes and follows the quotation, he often finds revealed the secret opinion of the writer. Thus, in the beginning of the grand allegorical scene of the earthly paradise, the poet, desiring to warn his readers that they must read the visions of Ezekiel and St. John, if they hope to comprehend his own, dares not speak openly; but, making a pretext of the four mystic animals and their wings, he writes: "Read Ezekiel," "John is with me;" and, if we look over the pages of the prophet and the apostle, we shall soon see how very valuable they are, in enabling us to trace the dark plan of the Ghibelline bard. We might adduce numberless instances of such quotations, taking them from the letter to Can Grande. All the authors whom he there names, and the passages to which he refers, although seemingly mentioned with a different view, or thrown together undesignedly, are the very ones which, well examined, elucidate his own secret doctrines. In one place he tells those, who think his project very arduous, to turn to the king of Babylon's dream. In another we are informed (as if by accident) by a line in the margin, that Jupiter is both male and female, one and the same God; there he writes that Ezekiel speaks of Lucifer, while the quotation reveals that that Lucifer was a wicked prince, who sat in the seat of God, polluting his sanctuaries. There he declares that the God, whose glory he describes in his vision, is one in *similitude* and not in reality, citing another passage from the same prophet: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face." (ch. 1. v. 28.) Again, speaking of that same God, he brings to mind the three verses in the Paradise:

——— "In heaven
That largeliest of his light partakes, was I,
Witness of things, which to relate again,
Surpasseth power of him who comes from thence."

And he makes the following note on this passage, speaking of himself: "He saw some things which he neither can nor ought to repeat; and take great heed when I say, that he neither *can* nor *ought*." He tells his protector that he cannot enter into a full exposition of the meaning of his Paradise, on account of the distressed state of his family affairs (meaning the ill-success of his party); but that his hopes centre in him (the captain of the Ghibelline league), and he trusts that he will do great things, and enable him to proceed with that useful interpretation, which the present state of affairs has broken off. He ends by referring us to the Revelations, the key to all his secrets, saying that, as he has found God, nothing more remains for investigation, since he is the beginning and end of his poem: "At present, I cannot enter into an explanation of its real meaning; I am bound down by the distressed condition of the family affairs, so that I must omit many things which might be useful to the republic. But I trust in your power to do great things, and hope that, in the end, I shall be able to enter into a full explanation; and, since the beginning or first object is found, which is God, nothing more is necessary, for he is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega, as St. John says; and thus I finish in the name of God, and blessed be his name for ever and ever." In the same style, he finishes the Vita Nuova: "May it please him who is the *Lord of Courtesy*, that my soul may see the glory of his lady,* that blessed Beatrice, who happily beholds the face of him who is blessed for ever and ever." ("This word is taken from the *courts*, and it signifies either *courtesy* or *court customs*." Convito.) The *Lord of Courtesy*, then, means a lord, the head of a court; and this is the God of Dante's poems. In the preceding chapter, we saw him figured as a messenger from heaven; but this was not enough for the frenzied admiration of his partizan; and let us bear in mind this preparatory hint, until we convert it into an irresistible demonstration.

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* Does this refer to the Lord of Courtesy, or to the soul of Dante?

We might enumerate many other means devised to delude the general reader, and enlighten the sectarian. But all tended to one sole design, viz. that of writing so that each party might interpret according to their own wishes; and the following chapter will shew us the antiquity and frequent use of this mysterious language.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE SECRET SCHOOLS.

The art of speaking and writing in a language which bears a double interpretation, is of very great antiquity. It was in practice among the priests of Egypt; and probably it was from that country that it found its way, in the course of time, into other lands. Its one sense was adapted to the understanding of the common reader, the other to the intelligence of brighter intellects; and thus did the unlearned and the initiated look at the same thing under entirely different points of view. The whole fabric of mythology is based on this doctrine. Those absurd deities, who commanded the false worship of the ignorant, were regarded by the wise as so many emblems of the religion of nature: tremendous and hallowed divinities for the first; causes and effects of natural things for the last.

It is not our intention to explain here the abstruse mysteries of fabulous mythology; that task has, in a great measure, been already accomplished. Our only desire is to prove, by indisputable authorities, that the ancient schools of philosophy practised, and transmitted to their successors, the valuable and carefully-preserved art which forms the subject of the present chapter.

Our first authority is Clemens Alexandrinus: "The Aristotelians assert that some of their books are *esoteric*, and some *exoteric*:" that is, that some have an *internal*, and others an *external* meaning.—(Strom. B. 5, p. 681.)

Aulus Gellius repeats the same thing: " They say that the technical books, written by the philosopher Aristotle for the use of his disciples, are of two kinds; some he called *exoteric*, others *acroatic*. The first were intended for rhetorical studies, and the faculty of arguing; the second for the contemplation of nature, and logical disquisitions."—(Noct. Attic. B. 20. ch. 5.) He adds, that the Stagirite admitted all his disciples indiscriminately to the exposition of the first; but only a few chosen ones to the explanation of the last. Plutarch also mentions these books, when speaking against Colotes. They appear to have been written with so much skill, that, although read by every one, they were understood by very few; and those few had received the key from their master. We read that, when Alexander, his royal pupil, expressed his regret that such works should be allowed to fall into every hand, the philosopher replied: " Know that they are neither public nor private, neither published nor unpublished; seeing that they are only intelligible to those who have been my listeners."—(Aul. Gel.)

This style was borrowed by Aristotle from preceding philosophers, and especially from his preceptor, Plato; who, having seen the deplorable fate of his master, Socrates, and conceived a distaste for hemlock, invented a language for himself, more resembling the ways of poetry than the dry paths of philosophy. He transformed the nature of things, the different elements, the faculties of the mind, &c. into beings, composed of body and soul, whom he brought into action as gods and goddesses, demons, men, &c. The secret meaning of his theories, thus disguised, was understood by so few, that Apuleius called them—" Those sublime and divine doctrines of Plato, intelligible to very few of the most devout, and quite obscure to the profane."—(Apol. p. 419.)

Heraclitus, the Ephesian, a pupil of the same school, in his work *On Nature*, wrote so darkly, that he acquired the name of Scolinus, or the Obscure; and the well-known epigram, which speaks of him, contains these words:—

> "You must not, Heraclitus, slightly read;
> The way is rugged, and the book obscure;
> But, if into his sense he does you lead,
> All's plain, and, like the sun itself, most pure."
>
> Diog. Laert. B. 9. S. 8.

Cicero, in his work *De Finibus*, (B. 5. ch. 5.) says of his time—"There are two kinds of books; one written for the people, and called *exoteric;* and the other more finely composed, which they explain in their commentaries;"—this is the *esoteric*. And hence he concludes that, by this method of writing, an author may sometimes appear to contradict himself, while the very reverse is the case.

Many works of antiquity, then, were written both with an *external* and an *internal* meaning; and principally by Plato, Aristotle, and their disciples. Now, let us recollect, that, in the middle ages, the doctrines of the two Grecian philosophers were taught in every school; and that the works of the great teachers of the Academy and the Lyceum, have never been, either before or since, so deeply studied. Dante, in all his works, professes himself an Aristotelian. And it was in these times, when the doctrines of Plato, which transformed abstract ideas and physical things, into beings endowed with human qualities, were brought to life again, that the minds of men began to be led astray by the absurdities of the *Platonic Love*, which was as little believed in as it deserved to be, and on which critics have wasted so much fancy to so little purpose.

A learned writer of the last century, John Toland, whose works are full of curious researches, has left us a dissertation, called "Clidophorus, or Of Exoteric and Esoteric Philosophy: that is, of the External and Internal doctrine of the Ancients: the one, open and public, accommodated to popular prejudices; the other, private and secret, wherein, to the few capable and discreet, was taught the real truth." In this work, much more is said respecting this double language than we have ventured on. But, although we are far from agreeing with the opinions of the author, we have found some passages in his treatise which fully coincide with our own views on the subject of the impolitic persecution which was the real cause and creator of the amphibological language; and from these we make a few extracts. "This (persecution) must of necessity produce ambiguities, equivocations, and hypocrisy, in all its shapes; but which will not merely be called, but actually esteemed, necessary cautions; occasioned, in all times and places, by ambitious priests, supported by their property, the mob: thus depriving us of the peace of life and the truth of religion; yea, of philosophical discoveries and improvements, to the no small detriment of mankind. In all this affair, pride is ever joined to interest; for never was any pride equal to the pretence of infallibility.—This double manner of teaching was also in use among Oriental nations, and especially the Ethiopians and Babylonians, the ancient and modern Brahmins, the Syrians, Persians, and the rest, principally instructed by Zoroaster. The Druids of the Gauls and Britons would by no means deliver their mysteries, or secret doctrines, to any except the initiated—to say nothing of the present Chinese, Siamese, and Indians properly so called, the thing being so notorious as to be denied by nobody. The disciples of Pythagoras were either hearers or mathematicians, or exoterical or esoterical, whom we may render exterior and interior auditors. All things were declared to the esoterical (but without witnesses) in a plain, perspicuous, and copious speech; while every thing, on the contrary, was delivered to the exoterical in a perplexed, obscure, and enigmatical manner: nor was any thing told clearly, except popular and vulgar matters. The silence enjoined to the latter, lasted five years; but that of the former, whom they also styled or reputed *perfect*, was perpetual;—not towards each other, (as has been rashly believed by many,) but only towards all those who were not of their fellowship. They reserved their own doctrines to themselves, as so many holy secrets; or, if any others happened to be present, they told their minds to each other by symbols, and enigmas, and parables. Whence it has unluckily happened, that scarce any thing, which was of use or moment among them, is come to the knowledge of modern times; this being the true reason of the obscurity, or rather the almost entire loss, of the Pythagorean philosophy. Lysis, the Pythagorean, severely chid his condisciple, Hipparchus, for having published some points of the esoteric philosophy; and for having communicated to men, who were neither initiated nor prepared by contemplation and the necessary sciences, their master's doctrine. Whereupon he was expelled out of the school, and a monument was erected for him, according to the custom of the Pythagoreans, as if he had been already *dead*. We ought, in the meanwhile, most carefully to observe, that the priests were everywhere the cause why the philosophers invented those occult ways of speaking and writing: for while the priests industriously concealed their mysteries, lest, being clearly understood, they might, by the philosophers, be exposed to the laughter of the people as fabulous, false, and useless,—the philosophers, on the other hand, concealed their sentiments of the nature of things *under the veil of divine allegories;* lest, being accused of impiety by the priests, (which often happened), they might be exposed, in their turn, to the hatred, if not to the fury, of the vulgar."

In various parts of his works, this writer informs us, (and with truth), that, in his time, this double language was constantly in use. In this same dissertation (page 94,) he says: "I have more than once hinted, that the external and internal doctrine are as much *now* in use as ever though the distinction is not so openly and professedly approved as among the ancients."

Now, if, in times so near our own, we find that this language was as much as ever in use, how much more likely was it to be so when Dante lived, and persecution raged on every side. We will here recall a few facts, in support of our argument, before we go on to prove that the mystic doctrine, transplanted into Europe from the East, *did* secretly flourish in Italy in Dante's time; that many of its proselytes fell victims to their imprudent use of it; and that, finally, in spite of every obstacle, far from being extinguished, it spread so much the more, and has even descended to our own age.

Whoever examines with attention the writings of that period, will find in them many traces of the secret school. Why were the Templars, who were members of the most illustrious families in Europe, sacrificed by hundreds in different countries? Why were the Patarini burned alive in almost every city? History tells us: They belonged to secret societies, and professed doctrines inimical to Rome. What those doctrines were, is well known, as far as regards the Patarini, but nothing has been conclusively ascertained respecting the secret opinions of the Templars, although so much has been hazarded.

Arnold of Villanova, the celebrated physician, was a very learned contemporary of Dante; and like him a persecuted exile; in his work entitled the *Testamentum*, we read that "Philosophers wrote with a double meaning; the one was *true*, the other *false*—the first was expressed in dark words, for the understandings of the children of wisdom; the last was couched in plain language." In his *Liber Saturni* he wrote: "The philosophers wrote for their children only! and by their children I mean those, who understood their works in their *real* and not their *literal* meaning."

Raymond Lully, another of Dante's contemporaries, was a disciple of this Villanova, and in the vast collection of works left by him, (which one could scarcely read in the course of a natural life,) all the arts taught by his master were put into practice. He was accused of heresy, and after wandering for some time from one kingdom to another, making proselytes to his doctrine, he at last, had recourse to the language of conventional hypocrisy, and pretended (as did Dante) to be reconciled to the Romish Church. "Lully (say his biographers) was as obscure in his expressions as in his ideas. His work on logic is insane; but the Spanish doctors say that his motive for writing it was, to enable us to defend ourselves against Antichrist, (and we well know who is meant by that word) by retorting his own arguments.* In short, it is a treatise written in the double language, and shewing that by a skilful use of it, an author may be considered the most orthodox of Catholics, while he is waging a deadly warfare against the Pope and his church.

Dante's age was more than any other fertile in secret societies, and enigmatical works; and a glance over the dictionary of Heresies will shew us under how many forms their hatred against Rome was disguised. We shall see that the art of expressing a thing with two meanings, called the art of speaking *secretly* or *shortly*, was taught in the schools on regular principles; that it was the first of the seven mystic sciences known as the Trivium and the Quadrivium, and that it was called the *Grammar*. Dante mentions this in the Vulg. Eloq. and again in commenting the first canzone of the Convito. The famous Cardan, in describing its nature, which he does in a very few words, asserts, with great truth, that very many writers used this art. We will copy his words as we read them in the treatise *on Secrets* by Wecker, who translated them under the title of "*The Secrets of the Grammar*, to know how to speak secretly.—We may conceal the meaning ... by using words which convey another sense; the Italians call this a *cant language*. Long observation is requisite; but, by dexterity all suspicion may be avoided. There is another mode of speaking which is likewise very becoming a grave man, and is called *brief* speaking; this last conveys a double meaning also; and therefore it is familiar and suitable to the learned in their writings." (Les Secrets, &c. p. 733.) Were it not for the expositions on which we have already entered; these words would be to us an enigma. Who could point out to us these learned writings? True, there are numbers of them in circulation under our eyes, but they are unknown, because they bear a double meaning; the one true and the other false; the first written obscurely; the last openly. The generality abided by the second meaning, because they were not aware that those writings were intended to be taken *not literally*. Our analyses of the works of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and many others will prove this; and we say *many others*, because it is true, as Cardan asserts, that this double language was familiar to the learned in their writings.

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* See the Dict. Univ. Hist. Crit. Bibliog; art. Lulli Raimond.

Very much more might be added in support of our present argument; but we have already too long delayed the course of our disquisitions. Our chief object in producing these various authorities to strengthen our own opinion was, because we know that all novelty of matter inevitably causes a certain degree of incredulity in the mind of a reader.

If to all that we have said in this chapter, be added the proofs we brought forward in the second, where we treated of the pastorals of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and shewed that, by their own confession, they were written throughout in the conventional jargon; and the declaration of the latter, that poets wrapped the internal sense of their verses in a veil; and the confession of Dante, that his poem is entirely allegorical; if our interpretation of the Hell, and of the Quadriregio—the verses of Alighieri and those of Palingenius, be put side by side, we almost venture to flatter ourselves with the hope, that the argument to which we devoted this chapter, viz.: that a great portion of the works of the ancient writers contained a double meaning, external and internal, has been by us substantiated. Testimonies and examinations, assertions and proofs all agree, and what more can be required? Much more, before we can satisfy ourselves that our arguments are as full and convincing as they may, and we trust will be.

Dante, from his creative talent, was often called the modern Homer; and we might say of him, what was said of the ancient by his biographer, Dionysius Halicarnassus: "Let it not be deemed extraordinary that he veiled his ideas under studied enigmas, and fabulous discourses; it must be ascribed partly to the system adopted by poets, and partly to the custom settled by the ancients; that the lovers of learning, being allured by a certain elegance of style, might seek for the truth, and find it; and that the unlearned, might not despise what they could not understand; for we live in times when what is said figuratively is valued, and all that is expressed in plain language is regarded with contempt.*

But Dante learned the art of figurative writing from a source far more valuable than all the works of priests, poets, or philosophers. The prophetic books of the Old and New Testament were his instructors, and in their hallowed pages, he saw the most convincing examples of the power of the double language. How many endeavours have been made to explain, according to the customary forms of speech, the mysterious expressions used by the inspired authors, especially Ezekiel and St. John! Comparative vocabularies have been drawn up, selected with great care from those sacred writers, in order to fix the true meaning of their allegorical pictures, and from a long list of these interpreters, we will offer the theory of one of the most modern, an English clergyman, who appears to have deeply studied the works of his predecessors.

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* Petrarch assigns the same reason for concealing under a veil, in his figurative eclogues, all his detestation for Rome. See the preface prefixed to the Epistles *sine tit.*

The Rev. George Stanley Faber, in his recent work entitled "The Sacred Calendar of Prophecy," proves that the language of the divine prophecies is entirely figurative, and that conventional symbols and emblems are therein substituted for common words and literal meanings; and descending to examples, he produces numberless instances wherewith to strengthen his interpretation. With the bible in his hand, he shews that earth and sea, sun and moon, life and death, earthquake and storm, mountain and river, besides numberless other words, sentences and images which fill these prophetic pages, signify in their *internal* sense something very different from their mere *outward* meaning. We understand them to represent one thing, and they convey some allusion totally opposite to their supposed signification. St. John himself informs us that by the two females of the Apocalypse we are to understand two cities with their inhabitants; by the seven heads of the beast the seven hills of the wicked city; by angels, bishops; by waters, people; by a number a man; and so with other things. Hence the English divine, following up these indications infers, that of the two females, the chaste one is the type of the true church, and as such considered the spouse of Christ, and that the wicked one, opposed to her, is a symbol of the apostate and idolatrous church. He calls this language, "the technical and conventional phraseology of the prophetic schools," and is of opinion that it was taught in the prophetic seminaries of the Hebrews; nor does he appear to be singular in this idea. These are his words: "The proper use, and import of this language, comprising the hieroglyphical system of the ancient Hebrews, seems to have been taught, as one great branch of education in those schools of the prophets, which are often mentioned in the scriptures. There is nothing incongruous in supposing that the pupils were instructed in the meaning and application of the established prophetic phraseology." Ch. 1.

Every volume thus written, is called by the prophets themselves, " A book written within and without;" that is, with an internal meaning for the wise, an external one for the vulgar; and to eat the book signifies to learn the language, which was evidently invented to deceive those who would have been incensed against the writers. The device succeeded so completely, that they accepted, as welcome compliments, the very sentences in which they were most severely held up to odium. Two corresponding passages, the one from Ezekiel, the other from St. John, will illustrate our idea.

The first desired to express this fact: God said unto me, Thou shalt now make known my word; but that the minds of men be not exasperated, speak to them in a double language; the inward or bitter sense shall remain invisible, while the outward shall be made to appear acceptable. Thou art not sent to a people of profound ideas and unknown language, where all that thou sayest would be understood, but to the house of Israel, where few will comprehend the language in which thou wilt speak. Instead of writing thus, he expressed himself as follows: — " But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house; open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, a hand was sent unto me, and lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written *within* and *without*, and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning and woe. Moreover, he said unto me: Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and do speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll," &c. (Ezekiel, ch. 2 and 3.)

Now let us hear St. John. " And I saw, in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." (Rev. ch. 5.) The mystic Lamb opened the book in heaven, and an angel descended with it unclosed. "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said: Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel, which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him: Give me the little book. And he said unto me: Take it, and eat it up." (ch. 10.) We do most humbly revere the pages which contain God's holy word; but we must confess that those who interpret these and similar passages, *allegorically*, (and in this, the learned are generally agreed) appear to us much more logical than those who can seriously believe that a heavenly voice commanded two holy men to devour a book written within and without; and that they, after their repast, being ordered to prophecy, immediately spoke in the dark language, which has given rise to so many discordant interpretations.

St. Jerome, writing to Paulinus and Marcellus, says, that the Apocalypse contains *as many secrets as words;* and that it must be understood entirely *in a spiritual sense*. And Clement of Alexandria, who is an authority above all suspicion, writes thus: — "All those who have treated *of divine things*, whether Greeks or barbarians, have concealed the real motives which induced them to write, and have enveloped the truth in enigmas, symbols, allegories, and metaphors, as mysterious as the sentences of oracles. Poets themselves, who learned theology from the prophets, have generally philosophized very deeply, and followed their secret sense." (Strom. B. 5.) And with regard to Dante and his followers, who have, throughout their writings, confused together holy things and Platonic love, we may repeat the significant words from the *Platonisme devoilé*. "They followed their manner of philosophizing, which was to speak in terms so absolute that the *allegory* was not perceived, in order that what they said should have a more mysterious appearance. They took for granted that *minds of the first order*, for whom they wrote, *knew the secret*; and, as for the vulgar, it was their object to conceal it from them. And who can tell but that they affected to give an air of dogma to all they *pretended* of the Verb, and concealed the secret of the allegory, for the purpose of investing him, by this appearance of majesty, with more respect and awe in the eyes of the people, who are always lovers of the marvellous?" (p. 204.) These are remarkable words, which will be confirmed to us by Dante's repeated confessions; he will tell us in precise terms that he so wrote, and for the very reasons here given.

Petrarch relates that, being one day in company with the persons who were the real subjects of his Latin pastorals, (that is, with the cardinals and perhaps the Pope likewise) he was asked the meaning of some of the figures described in the eclogues, when he found presence of mind enough to evade the question, by giving a false interpretation to those bitter satires. He relates this fact in the preface prefixed to the letters *sine titulo*, which are throughout violent philippics against the court of Rome; and he tells us, that his Latin pastorals contain *secretly* the same matter treated of *openly* in those letters. But these remarks cannot be clear to the minds of our readers, until we have dispersed the clouds which hang over the loves of Petrarch and Laura. In the loves of Dante and Beatrice, we are about to consider an analogous subject.

We fully agree with the observations made by the before-cited interpreter of the Revelations, that without a key they cannot be understood; but that that key once found, the book is soon unclosed. As he justly says, the Scriptures furnish us with a key to the scriptural hieroglyphics, and when these are once deciphered, there will be but little difficulty in transferring a mystic prophecy into the literal value of a living language.*

The same may be said of Dante, to whom we now return. The key to his allegorical figures is furnished by himself, and with it we will endeavour to open the secret recesses of the book, written within and without. But we are fully conscious of the difficulty of accomplishing this hitherto unattempted project. It is evident, from the great pains taken to involve the poem in obscurity, that it is of a nature to give offence to many. If he who thus originally shrouded its meaning dreaded the consequences of its discovery, so may we who draw it from its veiled sanctuary, with reason entertain a similar apprehension. We need not again repeat, that, under the veil of divine allegories, things of deep moment were hidden, and that Dante put into full practice the whimsical logic of his contemporary Lully. He chose, for the guide and companion of his figurative journey, the Mantuan bard, who sung *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit;* and we may reasonably conclude, that the god of his mystic poem, opposed to the Lucifer, is of the same nature as that guide and master's god.

As it raises the veil which hangs over these mysteries, criticism implores the indulgence of the religion it reveres, if any unintentional boldness should intrude into its remarks; and surely that daughter of heaven will not be less holy, even if these remarks prove that a trembling muse, for its own safety, was induced by fear to disguise itself in her sacred vestments.

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* See the before-cited work of the Rev. G. S. Faber, vol. i. p. 12.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CHARACTER OF DANTE'S POEM.

In the secret but deeply-rooted animosity of Alighieri against the Papal Court, we may trace the prevailing spirit of the age in which he lived. A reform, both in church and state, was imperiously demanded; and the same detested object was considered as the author of the corruption of the one, and as the usurper of the other. Dante firmly believed that the regeneration of the empire under the Cesars would be the new-birth of Italian happiness; and, for this opinion, he sacrificed his peace of mind and fortune, cherishing it only the more fondly for all that it cost him. Putting aside, therefore, his own repeated avowals, we have every reason to suppose, from facts, that it was the latter of the two sentiments, viz. his political feelings, which principally induced him to compose the poem in which he exhausted all the powers of satire against the enemy who prevented the consummation of his wishes; and where, in an imaginary hell, he depicted the state of Italy under the withering influence of the Emperor "who sways the realm of sorrow," and feeds luxuriously on Brutus and Cassius, the betrayers of Cesar.

It is believed by the learned, and confirmed by the authority of Jovius and other writers, that the epitaph inscribed on his tomb, at Ravenna, where he died an exile, was written by himself during his last illness. The three letters, at the head of the inscription—S. V. F.: *Sibi vivens fecit*, (For himself he made it, while living)—are a strong evidence of the correctness of the opinion. On the epitaph we read, "I sang the rights of the monarchy, among the blessed, in Phlegethon, and in the infernal lakes." And, because his design in writing this poem was to sing the rights of the Roman monarchy, he chose for his master and guide that Virgil who, in Eneas, celebrated its virtual founder. Otherwise, why select the ghost of a pagan to lead him through the hell of Christians? But, before we proceed further to establish this point, we must take a short review of some of his other works; and, especially, we must confront together the two principal rival figures of his grand design, which offer its epitome and substance together.

Almost in the middle of his Commedia, Dante inserted a scene which there shines resplendent above all the others, like an obelisk in the midst of a plain. It is prepared by what precedes, and illustrated by what follows it; and it is worthy of all the reader's attention, presenting, as it does, the heavenly Beatrice contrasted with the *woman* of the Revelations—the pure with the wicked—virtue with vice. On the illustration of this scene, which we are now on the point of commencing, depends, in a great measure, the explanation of the whole poem; for it is the casket which incloses the principal mystery.

We begin by asserting that, according to the express declaration of the poet himself, the shameless female of the Inferno is not a woman, but an allegorical figure of the Pope; and, moreover, that the chaste one, her rival, is only imagined there in order to contrast with her. Suppose we were shown a picture, painted by a first-rate master, wherein the effect of light and shade was so admirably contrived as to deceive us into the idea that we were gazing on nature's self: by looking attentively again and again, we should perceive our mistake. We should see that what we took for shade was a colour which imitated it, but not real shadows; and when fully convinced of the delusion, would the idea ever enter our mind that the light painted at the side of the shadows was not a colour, but real and physical light, like that of the sun? What should we think of the judgment of any critic, who would assert that the iron age is figurative of the corruption of manners and consequent misery, but that the golden age really signifies the abundance of the metal which is dug from the mine, and worked by the goldsmith?

So Dante, in one picture, represents these two females: and if, in the one, we recognize the Antichrist and Anticesar, under the generic names of the wicked Babylon and its ruler, to say the very least, we must suspect that the other is meant for Christ and Cesar, under the names of the Holy Jerusalem and its king. But let us not trust to suppositions, nor forget that the real interpreter of Dante is St. John; who, in the Apocalypse, introduces both these allegorical females, and with similar forms of language. The first, in ch. xvii.: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; and upon her forehead was a name written, Babylon the Great," &c. This is the exact model of Dante's wicked female. And, in ch. xxi., we read: "Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." And this is the Beatrice whom Dante was carried to behold on a high mountain, who came down from heaven adorned like a bride, and to whom was sung—*Come, spouse, from Libanus.* It is true, that he dared not give her the name of *Jerusalem* openly; but, in his own mysterious style, he so called her in several places: as when he describes himself at the foot of the lofty mountain, on whose summit he beholds this city or lady:—

> "Now had the sun to that horizon reach'd
> That covers, with the most exalted point
> Of its meridian circle, Salem's walls."—(Purg. 2.)

This circle covered the summit of the mount where the New Jerusalem appeared to him, which he describes with so much circumlocution. The reader's thoughts are naturally directed to the site of the real Jerusalem, while Dante meant to signify the figurative *New Jerusalem*—diametrically opposed to it, as seen by St. John in the spirit.

The poet describes minutely the first appearance of this allegorical lady, and the magnificence of her escort. She comes preceded by the books of the Old Testament, and the Sacraments; all personified. Around her are the four Gospels; and she is followed by the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Revelations; all likewise personified. The car on which she is seated is more splendid than that of the sun. On her right hand, stand the three theological, and on her left, the four cardinal, virtues. But soon the dragon, rushing from the pit, infuses his deadly poison into the car, which becomes transformed into the seven-headed and ten-horned monster; and after being thus rendered unworthy to carry Beatrice, by being made the image of the dragon, or Satan, behold, the *woman* boldly springs into it, and plunges into the *forest*, which is opposed to the *garden* where her rival remains.

But let us remark the difference: The heavenly Beatrice is still accompanied by the holy train who came with her from on high; while the other goes her way, on the transformed car, with no holy books, no sacraments, no virtues, no companion but an earthly king. And knowing that this shameless one, who has nothing of heaven belonging to her, figures Babylon and its ruler, we are forced to exclaim—What an opinion had Dante of the

Pope! Could he pay homage to one whom he described in such colours; a pope destitute of all that ought to be-belong to him? No holy volumes, no sacraments, no virtues!

As it is very clear that the poet intended, in these two females, to represent the extremes of Good and Evil personified, we might substitute for their names the scriptural ages of Babylon and New Jerusalem, or the ages of iron and gold, which signify precisely the same thing. The Golden age supposes the realization of the perfection of religion and good government; and these blessings can only be obtained from an excellent monarch and a virtuous priest. We need not say that the iron age is diametrically the reverse of this state of things.

This being admitted, the golden age, when personified and reduced to a female figure, is the lady who blesses, or Beatrice: it it gives the two blessings to which man aspires—those of mortal and eternal life; and causes him to enjoy this life in a terrestrial paradise, with the hopes of a heavenly one on high. What he receives on earth, is owing to the moral and intellectual, or cardinal, virtues practised by a good monarch. What he expects in heaven is from the holy, christian, or theological virtues, as taught by a virtuous priest. These two abstract perfections, reduced to a substance, form the Beatrice, who blesses with a twofold blessing; and hence the cardinal virtues stand on her left, and the theological on her right-hand. According to this analysis, then, we say that the imaginary Beatrice, in whose eyes Dante beheld great mysteries—"in one figure now reflected, now in other," (Purg. 31.)—includes in herself the perfect and essential qualities of an excellent emperor and of a holy priest.

But who can insure this? We might answer, *criticism;* but we say, *Dante.* Let Dante, then, interpret himself—for his words merit all our attention — and explain away every doubt on this question. The following is from the *Monarchia* —

" Unerring Providence has directed the mind of man to aspire to two blessings ; viz. that of the present life, which consists in the practice of virtue, and is figured by the *earthly paradise ;* and that of life eternal, which consists in the enjoyment of the divine presence : but to this last, human virtue can never arrive, unless it be aided by divine intelligence — and that is the *celestial paradise.* To these different blessings, as to two different points, we must attain by separate means. To the first (which is figured in the Earthly Paradise) we must arrive by means of philosophy, whose rules we must follow, acting according to the moral and intellectual virtues (prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice). And to the last, (which is figured in the Celestial Paradise,) we must arrive by the exercise of the theological virtues (viz. faith, and hope, and charity). To gain this twofold object, man needs a double government ; a high priest, to guide him through the revealed word, to life eternal ; and an emperor to lead him by the precepts of philosophy to earthly bliss. And this should be the chief object with this emperor or ruler, in order that while a dweller on earth, man may be at peace.* The Emperor and the Pope then, being connected together (by the Papal and imperial authority, the one relating to paternity and the other to dominion), they ought always to act together in concert, and be reduced to a unity ; and this unity will be either a very God, in whom all is united, or a being inferior to God, in whom the differences belonging to each separate character will be distinctly particularised. In short, the Pope and the Emperor, in their characters as men, should be blended into one."† And into *one* he reduced them.

Here let us pause for a moment. Dante says that man needs two rulers to guide him to the two blessings; the Emperor, by the practice of the cardinal virtues, to bring him to the first, or earthly paradise; the Priest, by the exercise of the theological virtues, to lead him to the second, or heavenly paradise; and that both rulers should be blended into one. And all this is described to a hair's breadth in the Beatrice of the poem, in whom both Emperor and Pope are united. On one side, she has the four cardinal; on the other, the three theological virtues. she governs Dante in the earthly, and guides and instructs him in the heavenly paradise. In her are figured all the characteristics of each ruler; — she is the Emperor who makes his earthly abode blessed, she is the Pope who leads him to the bliss of a heavenly paradise; and therefore called *Beatrice, our blessing;* in whose eyes he contemplates those mysteries which we shall explain hereafter.*

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* See Monarchia, near the conclusion.

† B. 3. p. 87. See there all his arguments respecting this unity, considered either as God or man.

In Dante, all is symmetry. Throughout his poem, there flows such a spirit of harmony, that it is scarcely possible to discover the meaning of the allegorical figures in one sense, without doing so in the opposite one also, so wonderfully are they blended into one another. This was an art which he studied and professed upon principles, and wrote accordingly: "Man finds those things beautiful whose parts correspond, for from harmony results pleasure." (Convito.) It is very difficult to explain the emblematic figures of this poet, without falling into the adoption of his language; but, as pious believers have told of heresies without themselves departing from the faith, so may we bring to light a bold conception without for a moment wavering in our reverence for holy things.

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* See the Vita Nuova, where he writes, that when he saw Beatrice, the animal spirit, which dwells in the chamber to which all the sensitive spirits carry their perceptions, he began to wonder greatly; and, speaking especially to the spirits of the face, said these words: "Already comes Our Blessing." This jargon will be explained hereafter.

In accordance with his plan of universal harmony, Dante made his Lucifer three in one, because such is God. There are ten circles in hell, and Lucifer in the middle; there are ten spheres in paradise, and God in the centre. If he says that Beatrice is God, three in one (and he does say this), we may conclude for certain that her adversary is Lucifer, three in one. Is the Satan who feeds on the betrayers of Christ and Cesar, Antichrist and Anticesar? Then is his very opposite Christ and Cesar. Is this Satan, or Antichrist and Anticesar, the *woman?* Then her opposite, the Christ and Cæsar, must be Beatrice. As, in one single imaginary being, he unites the qualities of true Pope and true Emperor, so, in the opposite figure, he describes the false Pope and false Emperor.* Now, if our assertions as to this Beatrice be (what from the words of the poet and our own analysis we pronounce them to be) correct, it becomes a matter of certainty that the lovers of Dante and this lady are allegorical. Nor are we the first to advance this opinion — for several ancient Florentines,† as well as Filelfo, and the Canon Biscioni, &c. had the same idea; but they confined themselves to assertions, while we shall produce proofs, from Dante's own confessions, and from other sources, so numerous and so indisputable, that our conclusions will amount to a mathematical demonstration.

It is possible that he may have loved, or pretended to love, a Florentine called Beatrice. We will not dispute that point; but those who believe that the Beatrice of his writings is a real and not an allegorical female, are bound to believe also that the *woman*, opposed to her, is a real and not a figurative person. The error has arisen from an ignorance of the system of that secret language in which he wrote; which enjoined that beings purely mental, should be described as tangible, visible and living; that all the qualities of mortals made of flesh and blood should be given to them; that they should be born and live, and grow and die, &c.; that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot they should resemble human beings; and that all the actions and passions attributed to them, should induce a firm belief that they were true females, and not allegorical figures of whom the author treated. This was the system which gave rise to the invincible illusion which has kept the world for so many ages in error — an error which we would have attempted to dispute on our own authority, had there not been still extant several treatises which explain the fictions of that conventional language, and render such a course unnecessary. But without their aid, the words of Dante, if well considered, will destroy the mental phantoms that he created. For instance, in one place he calls it, "The glorious lady of my mind, whom many called Beatrice, not knowing their own names." (Vita Nuova.) In another, having written for this *lady of his mind*, the well known Sonnet, "Amor che nella mente mi ragiona," he explains logically what *mind* signifies; and then adds, "Not without reason do I say that this love acts *on my mind;* I say it advisedly, to let it be understood, *by the part on which it* acts, what *kind of love it is*." (Convito, Treat. 3.) And elsewhere, "This noble lady will be known when her *chamber* is discovered, that is, the soul where she dwells." This soul was his own. "This lady was made with my soul, one and the same thing." This is but little; something much more decisive we shall hear from him, to convince us of the true nature of this *glorious lady of his mind*. It seems most strange how the world could have continued so long deceived with respect to Beatrice, after the many inuendoes and declarations thrown out by Dante himself (to say nothing of others); but such has been the delusion, that many, like Pelli and Arrivabene, not only believe her to have been a Florentine lady, but scoff at the opinions of those who declare her to be all an allegory.

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* See the note F. at the end of the volume.

† "According to the judgment of several learned Florentines, Dante's Beatrice is an allegorical personage." Thus wrote De Sade.

We know from history, that the Patarini accused the Pope of spoiling and laying waste the church of Christ; we know also that the Ghibellines charged him with having fraudulently usurped the throne of Cæsar; and hence in Dante's allegorical scene, the *woman* steals the car of Beatrice, which is called *divine* and *august*, to represent the qualities belonging to the church of Christ and the throne of Cesar. If, after this self-evident allegory, we are told that Beatrice is not what we declare her to be, but Madonna Beatrice Portinari, a Florentine, the daughter of Folco Portinari, and wife of Simone de' Bardi, both Florentines; then we shall beg our informants to show us in what chronicle it is written that the Pope robbed the daughter of Folco, and wife of Simon, of a church and an empire.

What did the empire, deprived of its emperor, appear to Dante?

> "A vessel without a pilot in loud storm!"—(Purg. 6.)

What did the car appear without Beatrice?

> ——— "Like a ship it reel'd,
> At random driven, to starboard now, o'ercome
> And now to larboard, by the vaulting waves."—(Purg. 32.)

He compares Beatrice to the admiral of that ship, and the emperor to her pilot.

> "As to the prow or stern, some *admiral*
> Paces the deck, inspiriting his crew,
> When 'mid the sail-yards all hands ply aloof;
> Thus on the left side of the car, I saw
> *The virgin* stationed, who before appear'd."—(Purg. 30.)

"Although we see in a ship many officers and men employed for one object, yet it is only ONE who orders all for this object, and that is the *pilot;* whose voice should be obeyed by all. And it is clear, that to bring the human species to one universal religion, something of the nature of a pilot is necessary, with the right of absolute authority: and this office is called an *Empire*, and he who is placed in it is called an *Emperor*."—Convito, Treat. 4. p. 198. Here the Emperor is a pilot, who directs the crew of the vessel. There, Beatrice is an admiral, whose orders are obeyed from prow to stern, in the vessel he commands. Hence the car in which she advances is called *a Bark;* and in the scene where the *woman* leaps into it, we read that a voice from heaven was heard to cry, "O bark of mine! how badly art thou freighted!" Before this, while it was yet in Beatrice's possession, and bore her in the sacred throng, the poet writes, in that part which describes the halting of the figurative vessel; that it "stood firmly fixed, to duty there each one convoying, as that lower doth the *steersman* to his port." And on this passage the anonymous annotator remarks—"She instructs all who are in the procession, in their separate duties; as the *pilot* whistles at the helm when he enters the port, in order to summon all on board to their respective stations." Her car of triumph is compared to the one on which Augustus entered Rome; and before her is sung the verse written by Virgil, for the presumptive heir to the throne of that emperor — "From full hands scatter lilies." And to this mystic lady does Virgil, the bard of the Roman monarchy, guide the Ghibelline Dante, as to the last resting-place on his allegorical journey; that Dante, who, by his last confession, always sang the rights of the monarchy.

If we reflect for an instant, we shall not fail to be convinced, were it only by the attributes and character given to this Beatrice. For instance: Escorted by angels, she comes in triumph to the terrestrial Paradise, and is saluted with the words: "Hosanna, blessed is *he* who cometh;" sung to Christ when he entered Jerusalem in triumph.

She says to them: "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me" — the very words spoken by our Lord.

The angels sing: "In thee, Lord, have I put my trust."

By forced comparisons, evidently introduced intentionally, she is likened to our Saviour, when transfigured on Mount Tabor, before Peter, James, and John.

She is compared with Christ, when he raised the dead.

She comes from the east to the west, on the car which is emblematic of the Church of Christ, which from the east came to the west.

She is surrounded by the holy train we before enumerated; sacred books, sacraments, and virtues; things all relating to Christ and his church.

She is not only called the Holy Trinity, but particularized as the second person; and in this way: To convince us that this allegorical figure is a male changed into a female, like her rival, the poet makes *John* precede her, and changes him likewise into a female. In the Vita Nuova, he relates that he saw two ladies coming towards him, the one preceding the other. "The name of this lady, (the first) was *Giovanna;* and still gazing, I saw the wondrous Beatrice following her. This name *Giovanna* is taken from *Giovanni* (John) that John who preached the coming of the true light, saying — 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord.'" (Vita Nuova, p. 40.) And who was this Lord whose way was to be prepared, if not Beatrice, whom this Giovanna preceded? On this passage Biscioni remarks very sensibly: "Dante desires us to reflect particularly on the *office* of the Baptist; now who does not know that John was the precursor of the Incarnate Word?" If the forerunner's sex was changed, so was the sex of him who followed; and Giovanna and Beatrice were substituted for the Baptist and his divine Master. Christ is called *the wisdom* of God, and therefore Dante describes him as a female; but still while doing so, he makes the angels sing: " Blessed is *he* who cometh."

However enigmatical his words may appear, respecting this lady, the annotations of his friend are sufficiently clear. He repeats again and again, that Beatrice is Christ, with the double nature of man and God. For instance: When the three theological virtues lead Dante forward, that his *eyes* may behold the *eyes* of the mystic lady, which they call *emeralds*,* they tell him, " Spare not thy vision; we have stationed thee before the *emeralds*, whence love, erewhile, hath drawn his weapons on thee." (Purg. 31.) Here the interpreter says— " Spare not thy *intellect;* we have brought thee before the *emeralds*, that is, before the most precious stones, or *Christ*." On the manifestation of Beatrice, he writes— " Until now Beatrice is treated of insufficiently; but now that she openly manifests herself in the pure ether, where dwells the human and divine nature of Christ, no tongue can express the radiance which shines around her." And where Dante says that he gazed at the wondrous beauty of his lady, until " at this point o'erpowered I fail" (Par. 30.), the interpreter writes: " He says that no poet ever was so overwhelmed by the subject he had undertaken to write on, as he is now by this of the *Divinity*." (that is, Beatrice.) In these examples, we see the mystic lady named as *Christ* and as *God*. Again, when she advances towards Dante, all covered with a veil, he annotates: " The author wishing to introduce Beatrice, says that *he is veiled*, with a cloud, which has a tempering virtue, to enable the *eye*, that is, the *human intellect*, to confront (by means of the mystic and figurative writing) the bright rays of the divine beauty, by which he shows the divine essence, the substance of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." In this, the interpreter follows his author's own declaration, that his Beatrice, the number 9, is a figure of the Holy Trinity, in which is, of course, included the second holy person.

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* The eyes of Beatrice are called *emeralds*, not, as some explain, because they are green, but because, in the mystic language, three gems correspond with the three persons in the Trinity, and with the three theological virtues also. The diamond, the emerald, and the ruby, figure Faith, Hope, and Charity; and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three colours, white, green, and red signify the same things.

To sum up this analysis, let us repeat, that these rival females, so perfectly contrasted by Dante, are the same whom he took from the Revelations, that is, the wicked Babylon and the New Jerusalem; and in these two figures, which offer, as it were, the idea of good and evil personified, are represented two cities, with all their respective inhabitants; papal and imperial Rome and their rulers; the same object under two aspects. St. John tells us, that in the millennium, Christ will be the head of the New Jerusalem, uniting in his own person the two characters of supreme ruler of the kingdom and of religion. And therefore Imperial Rome, or Dante's New Jerusalem, contains within herself all that the brightest fancy can imagine, Christ in person bestowing the two blessings of earth and heaven, which are figured in the terrestrial and celestial Paradise. We all know who the figurative Saviour was, according to the Ghibelline creed, who was to redeem the human race from the slavery of Antichrist and Satan, the spoiler of the empire and the church. And Beatrice unites the two qualities of this Saviour in herself; she is both Pope and Emperor, reduced to a unity. Finally, these two allegorical figures express the following objects: —

Beatrice is a figure of Imperial Rome; the New Jerusalem, with Christ at its head, ruling over a virtuous, peaceful, and happy people.

Her rival represents Papal Rome, the wicked Babylon, with Antichrist, governing a vicious, anarchical, and miserable race.

The first, is the *city of life* and *truth;* the last, *the* *city of death* and *falsehood.* In offering them under the semblance of female forms, Dante exactly conformed to his original model, the Apocalypse.

St. John describes Babylon as the abode of demons, and the hold of every unclean spirit; and the New Jerusalem, as the dwelling of angels, and the habitation of the spirits of the just; and Dante paints Papal Rome as hell, or Babylon, under the dominion of Lucifer, three in one, full of devils and condemned; and Imperial Rome, as the New Jerusalem, or Paradise, with God three in one on its throne, and with angels and blessed spirits for its inhabitants.

We have already seen how many allusions to Papal Rome are crowded together in Dante's Hell; and we shall find at least as many in his Paradise, to connect that with the city of the empire.

CHAPTER XII.

ON OTHER WORKS OF DANTE, IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMEDIA.

If it be true, as Negri asserts, that Dante composed a work which he entitled: "Tractatum de Symbolo Civitatis Jerusalem et Almæ Romæ,"* its loss is to be infinitely regretted, for in all probability it contained very many things towards the elucidation of his poem. For, the title alone tells us that the figurative New Jerusalem and Imperial Rome, (and probably the figurative Babylon and Papal Rome) were there treated of in strict relationship, and if, even in the least important of his writings, he let fall many hints whereby we are enabled to unveil the sanctuary of his thoughts, how much more would he be likely to develop those thoughts in a work which expressly treated of the subject of them.

It is very true that he never called Italy *Hell* in plain terms; but he called it Babylon, which amounts to the same thing; and pronounced it to be one *universal prison*, an inn of grief, and worse still than this.† It was during his wanderings through this Hell, that he heard that Henry VII., that generous Emperor, who was hailed as the saviour of unhappy Italy, and by our poet likened to

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* It seems to us most probable that Negri by this treatise meant to signify the poem of Dante; with whose real nature he was very possibly acquainted.

† See Purg. Canto 6.

Christ, was coming as a peacemaker and physician, to heal the wounds of this diseased body, if indeed they were not past a cure. Delighted with the intelligence, and in the full expectation of a glorious redemption, he wrote two letters, one addressed to the people and princes of the Peninsula, the other to the redeemer in person; and in both of them he expresses his hope that the Golden Age will soon replace the Babylonish time. The following are extracts from the letter addressed to the Emperor:

"A hope of better times dawned on Italy. Many, anticipating from their own wishes, already sang with Virgil the Virgin and the kingdoms of Saturn,"

Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.

In the poem he adapted these words to the coming of our only real Saviour. The letter goes on to say: "The subtlety and persecution of that ancient and proud enemy, who is always secretly lying in wait for the sons of men—he has cruelly wronged and spoiled us. Overthrow then their dwelling places, descendant of Jesse; and as now we weep and lament our exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, so then, in peace and joy, we shall think over all the miseries of our present confusion." In this letter, he intimates that he had already seen the Emperor. "I saw thee in thy goodness, and heard thy mercy, when my hands touched thy feet, and my lips paid their lawful debt, and my spirit exulted within me." And what debt was this? The calling him *Saviour*: "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," the words of the blessed Virgin. In his letter on the coming of the Emperor, we read: "The lion of the tribe of Judah has lent a merciful ear to the groans which issued from this prison. Rejoice now, Italy—for thy spouse,* the delight of the age and the glory of the people, the merciful Henry hastens to thy nuptials.[*] Dry then thy tears, O loveliest, and put away thy sadness, for he who will deliver thee from the *prison of the wicked* draws near; he will put all the workers of wickedness to the sword, and his vineyard will he give to other labourers.[†] Employ yourselves therefore, in confessing his supremacy, and sing the penitential psalms." Those psalms he adapted to the occasion, and the allusions to our true Saviour he applied to the coming of his figurative redeemer Henry. He prays to be delivered from the "abhorred worm, that boreth through the world," (Inf. 34.) and to see the great work of the holy Jerusalem brought to perfection. "O, be favourable and gracious unto Sion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Sion, for it is time thou have mercy upon her; yea, the time is come. And why? thy servants think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust. When the Lord shall build up Sion, and when his glory shall appear.[‡] When he turneth him unto the prayer of the poor destitute, and despiseth not their desire. This shall be written *for those that come after;* and the people which shall be born shall praise the Lord. Out of the heaven did the Lord behold the earth; that he might hear the mournings of such as are *in captivity*, and deliver the people appointed unto death." (Ps. 102.) "The enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath laid me in the *darkness*, as the men that have been long *dead*. Therefore, is my spirit vexed within me.[§] Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that *go down into the pit.*" (Ps. 143.)* "I will inform thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go; and I will guide thee with *mine eye.*" (Ps. 32.) This is a clear allusion to the poem, and to the allegorical manifestation of the eyes of Beatrice in the earthly paradise, while the angels were singing:

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* The Apocalypse calls the New Jerusalem *the Bride of the Lamb*, and so did Dante and other writers call Italy and Rome.

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[*] "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. xix. 7.

[†] The vineyard of the Lord, is his church.

[‡] In the Convito he declares Rome to have been built by the especial will of God. "David was created, and so was Rome; and no man ought to hesitate in believing that the foundation and progress of that *holy city* was owing to God's special interposition." Treat. 4.

[§] He expresses his grief at being compelled to live with those *dead*, in the dark places of *Hell*.

"Turn Beatrice! Oh turn
Thy saintly sight on this thy faithful one,
Who, to behold thee, many a wearisome pace
Hath measured.
As they spake,
A thousand fervent wishes riveted
Mine eyes upon *her beaming eyes.*" (Purg. 31.)

Almost, if not quite, all of Dante's works, originated in one single and engrossing thought. The idea of a universal monarchy, governed by an Emperor of Rome, was the spirit which guided his pen. By his own dying confession, it was the sole aim of his Commedia. The *Vita Nuova* is the hieroglyphic key which opens the mysteries of that work, and the *Convito* is the philosophical key to the Vita Nuova, as he declares to us.† The *Monarchia* brings still more plainly into view the hidden meaning of the poem, and is of so much importance towards our interpretations, that in the present chapter we shall confine ourselves to an examination of the relative connection between it, the Convito, and the poem itself.

Before we enter on these considerations, it is necessary to take notice of one of the resources of this double language, because we find it taught in their treatises, and practised in all their poems. It is this: when the author of an enigmatical work desired to point out its secret design to his own sect, not daring to do so openly, he had recourse to the following artifice: He began by treating of matters apparently quite distinct from those he intended to explain; and while doing this, the very words he was writing on one subject interpreted the other; but so artfully, that none but those in the secret could understand any thing. This will be proved more satisfactorily hereafter, and then it will be seen whether we are not justified in here affirming that the Monarchia and the Convito explain the Commedia.

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* "Thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit." Isaiah xiv.

† "If the present work, which I have called the *Convito*, is written more plainly than the Vita Nuova, I do not intend it by any means to lessen the value of that work; on the contrary, it will be useful to it." (Convito, at the beginning.)

Dante calls his enigmatical poem a *treatise*, and describes its nature thus: "The form of the *treatise* is threefold, according to a triple division. The whole work is divided into three canzoni."* These canzoni, we need not remind the reader, are Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. In the first, the poet reproves the false government of the usurping Pope; in the second, he points out the means of rectifying it; in the third, he explains his theory of good government, which consists in the universal sway of an Emperor, the ruler of earth, as God is the ruler of Heaven. Hence he defines the work to be, a great poetical fiction, which shews what is good, and reproves what is evil, *by examples.* In the Paradise, he offers the example of what he desires to behold; in the Hell, he presents to view all that he most condemns, and the letter explanatory of the poem says that: "The form of this triple *treatise* is *poetical* and *figurative*—it approves and condemns, by means of examples. The title runs thus: Here begins the Commedia of Dante Alighieri the Florentine."

In the Convito, he comments on three Canzoni, which correspond with the three of the Commedia, but inverted in this order: — Paradise, Purgatory, and last of all, Hell. And, in his prefatory remarks, he tells the reader that he has changed the order of the *poetical treatise* he is illustrating. "Take notice that, in this proem, we promise to treat of the truth first, and afterwards to condemn falsehood; and the treatise, on the contrary, first reproves falsehood, and then treats of truth. The principal design of both is to speak of the *truth*; and *falsehood* is reproved, in order to make that truth appear more evident. Here, therefore, we treat first of *truth*, as the chief end; and in the treatise," (the poem) "we have condemned falsehood first, because, when once false opinions are forsworn, truth is more freely received."* And, to make us clearly understand that he is speaking of the three parts of the poem, and not of the Convito, he adds: "When the meaning of this proem is understood, follow the *treatise*, which will be comprehended better, if divided into its three principal parts; after that, it will be advisable to make other divisions, in order to take in the full value of the sense. Let not the reader be surprised at these divisions, for he holds in his hands a *great* and *important* thing, hitherto little searched into by authors; and it has been purposely made *long* and *subtle*, that the words on which all the real meaning depends, might be perfectly unravelled."† In the following paragraph, he explains the nature of the *truth* which was his chief end, and which corresponds with the Paradise: "The root and foundation of imperial authority is in the wants of human nature, which all tend to the desire for happiness," as figured in the life of the blessed. And then he dwells at some length on the necessity for a universal monarchy, of which the Emperor of Rome ought to be the supreme head.

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* See the letter to Can Grande.

He tells Can Grande that the three parts of his poem have a double meaning, one *literal*, the other *allegorical*; and in the Convito he says, that they are a book *written within and without*; and that he treats of the outside, only to illustrate the inward part. " When there is both an *outside* and an *inside*, it is impossible to come to the last, until we have passed the first. Therefore, when discoursing on each canzone, I shall speak first of its *literal*, and then of its *allegorical* meaning, which *conceals the truth*."

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* P. 195. Ven. 1760. Ediz. di Zatta

† P. 196. Do.

While thus illustrating the Commedia, feigning all the while to interpret the Convito, what contempt do his words express for the veil of catholicism which he flung over the poem! We shall hear how deeply he regretted the necessity which compelled him to disguise his political sentiments under the mantle of religion, and how he detested the fatality which led him, if not exactly to profanation, at least to the hypocrisy of appearing to fight with good will under the banners of his enemy. It was the idea of being mistaken for a papalist, an idea abhorrent to his mind, which made him determine to explain in conventional language, for the benefit of the learned, the real meaning of the figures of the poem. " I fear that those who read the above-mentioned canzoni will upbraid me for allowing passion to have dominion over me; my present language will, I trust, show them, that no feeling save virtue has moved me. As my meaning is very different from what those canzoni outwardly express, I must explain them in allegorical language. Unless I am at the pains to show their real meaning, it will never be discovered, for it is hidden under *figures of allegory;* and not only will it be pleasant to hear, but very instructive and useful towards the understanding of other authors. This writing, which may almost be called a commentary, is intended to remedy the fault of the above-mentioned canzoni; some perhaps will find it hard (to understand); this obscurity is not used in ignorance, but to avoid a greater fault." (Treat 1. p. 68, 72, 73.) This greater fault, which he sought to avoid, was that of revealing the secrets of the conventional tongue; and hence he had recourse to *hard* comments; his plan was successful, for he made the world believe that he was discoursing on certain lyric odes, while he was interpreting his grand poem all the while; and we are so convinced that an impartial examination of his words will shew the validity of this assertion, that for the present we shall let this part of the subject rest, contenting ourselves with these preliminary observations, before subjecting the matter to a more severe scrutiny.

The Monarchia was composed with the same design, and was therefore divided likewise into three parts, of which the first answers to the Paradise, and the last to the Hell. The reason of this inversion is, that the writer's principal aim was to sing the rights of the monarchy, as his epitaph declares: "I sang the rights of the monarchy among the *blessed*, in Phlegethon, and in the *Lakes of Hell*." He treated in the first instance of the *truth*, and afterwards of *falsehood*, in order to bring the truth into a clearer light. (That the Paradise was considered by himself as the most important part of his poem, we may assume from the fact that he began by writing it in Latin, before he determined upon making it an Italian work.) He seems to have flattered himself into the hope, that when the world saw both truth and falsehood displayed in their true colours, meditation on them would lead to action; and hence he wrote: "The present work, being entirely political, is not meant for *meditation* only, but for *action*; its end and aim is *action*." (See the beginning of the Monarchia.) The letter to Can Grande says the very same thing of the poem. "Putting aside all abstruse arguments, I declare that the design of this work is to deliver man *in this life* from a state of misery, and to lead him to a state of happiness. Not for speculation, but for *action* was this work and all its parts intended." To deliver them from misery, by destroying the cause of it; to lead them to happiness, by establishing the producer of happiness! We need not say what course he advised, nor who was to be humbled and who exalted.

The prose and the poetical treatise, then, have the same object in view, but they seek to arrive at it by different paths. The first treats of universal monarchy *openly*, and the last *secretly*. The one with thoughts undisguised, the other with ideas veiled in mystery; the prose treatise brings forward arguments and proofs, the poetical presents images and examples. Boccaccio explains the difference, where he speaks of the manner in which poets conceal their opinions: "The philosopher condemns what he considers *false*, and praises what he believes to be *true*, in syllogisms; and the poet, casting aside syllogisms, conceals the truth which his imagination has conceived, as carefully as possible, under a veil of fiction." (Geneal. B. 14.) This is the ancient art, known so well by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio himself, by which an abstract truth is changed into a positive fact; an art which, ages before those poets lived, filled the pages of sacred as well as profane writers. Our Lord himself, instead of saying: Heaven has mercy on the penitent; told the story of the prodigal son; and instead of reminding us that we should always be prepared for God's summons, spake the parable of the ten virgins. And Dante, instead of wearying the reader (as he did in his prose treatise) with a chain of arguments in condemnation of the papal, and in praise of the imperial government, described in his poem a Hell and a Paradise. To feel the superiority of the art of the poet over that of the logician, we need only reflect that the Monarchia is now no longer read, while the Commedia is in every hand, the false arguments of the first becoming wondrous pictures in the last. He, who, in the prose treatise is an emperor, the supreme head of a universal monarchy, the kingdom of happiness; in the poem, becomes God, the supreme ruler in heaven, the kingdom of the blessed. And so, the Pope of the first becomes the Lucifer of the second, and by a transformation of sex, the Emperor and God becomes Beatrice, or the New Jerusalem, while the Pope and Lucifer is changed into the *Woman* or Babylon.

The three parts of the Monarchia argue the following theses: 1st. A universal monarchy is necessary for the happiness of mankind. 2dly. This monarchy belongs, by an exclusive right, to the Emperor of Rome. 3dly. The Pope has no temporal power, either over such monarchy nor over its monarch. We may extend these parts a little further, and view their correspondence with the three divisions of the poem.

We must remember that the monarch worshipped by the Ghibellines was *Emperor* of Germany and *King* of Italy: hence Dante made a distinction between the words *Imperare* and *Reggere*.

1. A universal monarchy, governed by an emperor, *ruling* over every part by representatives, and *reigning* in person in his capital city. This is the very essence of his Paradise.—" That Emperor, who reigns above; who, in all parts hath rule, there reigns and holds his citadel and throne. O! happy those, whom there he chooses!"—(Inf. c. 1.)

2. The government of this monarchy belongs, by right, to the Roman emperor, who alone can bring mankind, purged from vice, to the blessing of this life; figured in the terrestrial paradise.—" The end and aim of the whole work is to deliver man, *in this life*, from a state of misery, and to lead him to a state of happiness."—(Letter on the poem.) This is the centre-piece of the Monarchia, and of the poem; and it is bounded by the earthly paradise, (figurative of the blessing of this life), where the poet meets Beatrice, whom he calls *Our Blessing*; because she was the Emperor who was to bring about that blessing on earth.

3. The Pope has no legitimate authority over the empire; and his usurpation of it produced disorders, discords, and misery. This is the last part of the Monarchia; and it corresponds with the Hell, where the Pope is Satan, the

prince, reigning over a kingdom of discord and misery, in the first part of the poem. The question of a universal empire was so popular in those times, that, in the university of Bologna, (the ancient seat of the Italian muses, which long flourished under the auspices of the emperors), it was argued for several days, between four professors of jurisprudence, whether the Emperor was, or was not, *The Lord of the Terrestrial Orb*, and *The King of Kings;* and equal to that *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, in whom he was figured! And we learn from history, that two of them declared themselves warmly in favour of it; and especially Martino Gosia, who made a *God of the Emperor;* and, moreover, that his opinion was not without many followers, even in after ages.* We may reckon Cino and Dante among them; they were intimate friends and pupils of the same university; and, throughout their works, they supported that fantastic doctrine with the utmost fervour; especially Dante, whose works were more numerous than those of his friend, and who was never weary of enforcing his ideas.

In the Paradise, he explains that the happiness of the blessed consists in the conformity of their will with the supreme will of God, the sole monarch of the kingdom: it is one of the celestial inhabitants who speaks:—

> "Rather it is inherent, in this state
> Of blessedness, to keep ourselves within
> The divine will, by which *our wills with his*
> *Are one.*
> E'en as our king, who in us plants his will:
> And in his will is our tranquillity."—(Par. 3.)

There is a passage in the Monarchia which corresponds precisely with this:—" Men are happy when there is a unity of will among them. But this cannot be, unless there be *one ruling will* to which all the others submit;

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* See Ciampi's discourse, prefixed to the poems of Cino.—Pisa, 1813.

and, to bring this about, there must be *one prince*, whose will guides and governs all the others." (B. 1). Here we have the One ruling will of the Emperor, or supreme prince on earth, compared with that of God, the only Lord of heaven: the first is the bestower of an earthly, and the last, of a heavenly, paradise. This *Will*, which makes life blessed, is personified, and becomes the lady who blesses, or the lady Beatrice. The will of the prince, and the prince himself, are but one. And to this prince, and his glory, "by whose might all things are moved, and in one part sheds more resplendence, elsewhere less," (Par. 1.): "The Imperial Head, who reigneth ever," (Par. 12.): "Our Liege in the most secret council with his lords," (Par. 25.): who sits in "that true Rome," (as the paradise is called, in the 32d canto of the Purgatory), "wherein Christ dwells a Roman:"—To this Emperor did the Ghibelline bard always direct his thoughts, emblematically, as to the final object of his allegorical pilgrimage.

The mystic rhymers of the time usually addressed the Emperor, who was *anointed with chrism*, as Christ *the anointed.* For instance: Cecco da Valfreduzio, one of the exiles, on hearing that Henry VII. was expected shortly in Italy, wrote the sonnet mentioned by Allacci, in which he figured him as the conqueror of Satan, and the imperialists as the patriarchs in Limbo: "I am in Limbo; and I trust to see the glory of him who is the light himself. He will raise me from *death* to *life*, and keep me subject to *his will*," &c.

We have seen how Dante, in plain language, likened to Christ that beloved monarch, against whom his *Satan* raised up in rebellion both princes and people. At the beginning of the second book of the Monarchia, he wrote in the same vein: "Seeing that the people and princes league together against their anointed *Roman Prince*, with grief I apply to our *Cesar* the words which the prophet uttered, when speaking of the *Prince of Heaven:*

Why do the heathen so furiously rage together? The kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against *his Anointed*." In the decree, he issued against the rebels, Henry applied the same style of language to himself: "Following Christ's example, whose works we are doing." We are of the number of those who cannot reconcile their minds to Dante's most audacious allegory; and therefore we exclaim, with the ancient bishop Damasus—

"Jure pari regnat communis conditor ævi,
Et cum Patre pia regnans sublimis in arce
Sidereo sanctis insidit numine regnis,
Unde mare et terràs solo videt omnia nutu;
Suggerit humanis, et donat munera rebus."

It is however a curious fact, that a universal empire has been the cherished dream of various ages and people. A very few extracts from the French work "Recherches sur l'Origine du Despotisme Oriental," will be our best answer to the opinions of Dante and those who thought with him. "It seems to me that despotism owed not its power on earth either to will or to force; but that it was the melancholy consequence and the natural result of the kind of government which men chose, when in far-distant ages, they took for their model the government of the universe, as swayed by the Supreme Being; a magnificent but fatal project, which plunged nations into idolatry and slavery. We shall explain the nature of the ills which sprang from a theory whose object was the happiness of human nature. Societies, all preoccupied with heaven, forgot that they were yet on earth; they transformed the tie which should be natural between government and people, into a supernatural one; and not to lose sight of the kingdom of Heaven, they imagined some means of representing it here below; and thus enjoying a *heaven on earth*, and anticipating the lingering future which religion painted to them in such brilliant colours. But their speculation was the source of all their misfortunes and errors. They applied the principles of a heavenly, to an earthly kingdom, and those principles failed, because they were entirely out of place. They were obliged to support their fiction by a multitude of theories which were taken in those times for truths, and hence resulted a host of religious and political prejudices which were fatal in their effects both to religion and government. Thus did whole nations abandon themselves to a chimera which they called the *kingdom of God*. The picture which they drew of the felicity of the heavenly kingdom, caused the most absurd ideas to be entertained on liberty, equality and independence. They did not foresee that, by taking a mortal man for a *representative of the Divinity*, without subjecting him either to public opinion or the common laws of society, they gave themselves a tyrant; neither did they reflect that, although that mortal might be an emblem of *God*, they were not on that account justified in confounding the Supreme Being with a frail creature. To confuse heaven with earth, to refuse to bend to public opinion, to pretend to be more than man, is impiety. To believe that men ought to be governed on earth by *one sole will*, as the universe is ruled by the Supreme Being, is folly. The ceremonial of the Emperors, and the conduct and opinion of the people respecting them, are still speaking proofs that men have mounted the throne of the God Monarch, by the same road whose paths we have traced among every other nation; and that kings were placed and established there, to represent on this earth the sovereign Ruler of heaven, and to hold in their hands the sum of good and evil, which none but God alone is able to balance or dispense with justice. These unhappy ideas are still the basis of the sentiments and feelings of eastern nations towards their sovereigns. They believe that the diadem gives, by a divine right, the power of doing good or harm. Our forefathers aimed at arriving at happiness through this sublime perspective of the kingdom of heaven, and perhaps for some time they might have succeeded, as they usually celebrated that epoch as the *Age of Gold* and the *Reign of Justice ;* and as poets have all vied one with another in their endeavours to sing due praises of that primitive felicity."

We shall see hereafter that the idea of a kingdom of heaven on earth, as a means of establishing the Reign of Justice and the Age of Gold, was borrowed by Dante from an eastern sect which had been transplanted into Italy, where it had made an infinite number of proselytes.

We must now conclude our remarks on the connection between the *Monarchia* and the *Commedia.* Were we to make a complete analysis of the former work, we should find it the shadow of the latter, and see abundant evidence to prove that Dante's chief aim was to sing the rights of the Roman Monarchy, under the government of a supreme head, the dispenser of never-failing peace and happiness, which is compared by him to the bliss of heaven, as conferred by God. "God wills that every human creature should offer, as far as it be possible, the image of the divine similitude; the whole universe is but one long trace of his ineffable goodness. Men will be happy in proportion as they resemble God; and they will come nearer to this resemblance when they are all united under one; therefore, human beings approach nearer to God when they are under the dominion of *one Prince.* A monarchy then is necessary—and justice should be omnipotent within it. Hence Virgil, desiring to celebrate the coming of that happy time which he expected to see, (viz: the universal Empire of Augustus) sang:

> Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.

The Virgin signifies *Justice ;* the kingdoms of Saturn are those happy times still known as the *Golden Age.* Finally, *one* monarchy, that is, a universal empire is necessary for the happiness of the world." (B. 1.)

"A renovated world, Justice returned,
Times of primeval innocence restored,
And a new race descended from above." (Purg. 22.)

They, whose verse of yore
The golden age recorded and its bliss,
On the Parnassian mountain of this place
Perhaps had dreamed. (Purg. 28.)

And *this place*, dreamed of on Parnassus, is the Earthly Paradise where Beatrice appeared with her attendant angels and spirits "a new race descended from above."

This terrestrial paradise is a shadow of the golden age of the empire of Augustus, celebrated by Virgil; it is an emblem of the happiness of this life, under the sway of a universal monarch; and it is the kingdom to which Virgil led Dante in search of that Beatrice who was the haven of rest to the guide and the guided, the master and the disciple.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE VIRGIL OF DANTE'S POEM.

Have we yet succeeded in making it appear why Dante chose Virgil for the guide of his allegorical journey? Have we clearly shown why Beatrice is made the object and end of it? If so, we have already proved the absurdity of the opinion, by many still entertained, that in a poem which *sang the rights* of the monarchy, Virgil, the bard of the Roman empire, guided Dante, who sang those rights, to a Florentine lady called Beatrice Portinari, from whom the Pope had stolen a symbolic car.

Let us now inquire into the real nature of this guide and master. It is the Virgil who appeared to him in the first canto, to deliver him from the ravenous wolf who had come from hell, and who then took him into that hell, to see all the miseries produced by the Babylonish time. It is the Virgil who led him to consider on the means of repairing the vices of humanity, in the progressive course of a symbolic purgatory, and who restored him many times from weariness and anguish, by merely reminding him that he was leading him to Beatrice. The same Virgil, seeing him disheartened at the last and most arduous trial of the mysterious purgatory, that of the figurative fire, said to him: "Mark now, my son, from Beatrice thou art by this wall divided;" and at the sound of that magic name his pupil cast himself into the flames, and passed over. This guide left him not until he saw Beatrice appear in the earthly Paradise; and then, his mission being fulfilled, he vanished, as if to say: This is the object to which I was to lead thee. "Already appears our blessing."

Now, we affirm that this Virgil, who celebrated the Eneas, who

> ——— "Of Rome and of Rome's empire wide,
> In heaven s empyreal height was chosen sire." (Inf. 2.)

is a type of the political opinions which urged his disciple to sing the rights of the Emperor over Rome. These opinions, which first dawned under Julius Cesar, spread unrestrainedly during the reign of Augustus, and were professed by Virgil, who wrote his poem, expressly to celebrate the origin of the Julian people, who came, (as they say) from a son of Æneas, called Iulus, who went into Italy after the destruction of Troy. Dante personified these opinions, and transformed them into *Virgil;* and when he saw himself persecuted by the wolf in the dark forest, he had recourse to them; and they, or rather we will here call them, Virgil, thus characterized himself: —

> "Born when the power of Julius yet
> Was scarcely firm. At Rome my life was past,
> Beneath the mild Augustus, in the time
> Of fabled deities and false. A bard
> Was I, and made Anchises' upright son
> The subject of my song, who came from Troy
> When the flames prey'd on Ilium's haughty towers.
> But thou, say wherefore to such perils past
> Return'st thou? wherefore not this pleasant mount
> Ascendest, cause and source of all delight?"

And Dante, pointing to the wolf who was impeding his ascent, answered —

> ——— "See the beast, from whom I fled.
> O save me from her, thou illustrious sage!
> For every vein and pulse throughout my frame
> She hath made tremble."
> ——— "Thou must needs
> Another way pursue,"

answered Virgil; and to that pleasant mount, he did afterwards lead him, in spite of the wolf's opposition; it was to escape from her persecutions, that he made use of the mysterious language, which not only lulled *her* vigilance, but kept the world long in ignorance of the terrible satire hidden under the mask of the Romish creed.

As the poet made *Will* a female figure, so he made *Opinion* a male; and he caused the last to guide him to the first; that is to say, he described his attachment for the empire, as having led him into the presence of the Emperor. The will of that emperor he changed by the art of his school, into his Lady Beatrice. The opinions which attached him to the idea of a universal empire he transformed into his guide Virgil.

This is the place in which we may show how he confessed having chosen religion as a cloak for political opinions, together with his motives for so doing. In the first canto, he describes the loftiness of the empire, (the mountain) to which reason (the sun) guided him, and says that his ascent to it was constantly impeded by the Pope (the she-wolf.) His monarchical opinions (Virgil) then shewed him how to avoid the stumbling-block. We will now see how all this is expressed in figures.

When the wolf chased him out of the direct path which led to the mount, he fell into the valley again; and there Virgil appeared before his eyes (the intellect.) He immediately invoked him, saying: "O save me from her, thou illustrious sage." The Mantuan answered: If you wish to arrive safe at that mount, you must take another path, for that beast will not suffer any to pass her: she *slays* them all. (She opposes them until she compels them to *die* allegorically.) I invite you to *follow me*, and I will guide you through regions of misery into purgatory, and thence into those blessed realms where reigns the emperor, *who in all parts hath sway*. Or in other words: You must take this indirect and long way of religion, if you ever expect to reach the haven of political happiness to which you aspire; for your enemy's power will put a stop to any other course. Hence, when the straight-forward path was denied him, he struck into the crooked one; and by this he means to imply, that his long-drawn fiction, and his abuse of holy things, were the fault, not of Virgil, who advised him to take the indirect road, but of the wolf, who shut him out from the direct one. He makes use of the following devices, to shew that this desperate remedy was had recourse to *after* he was exiled. His banishment from Florence is predicted to him inside the city of Dis; when on the point of leaving that city, he feels quite dismayed, and following the steps of Virgil, they turn out of their former path, and strike into a road which leads *to the left*, into a valley. Here they hide themselves behind the cover of a monument, where lies the Pope, whom Photinus drew from the right way; and Virgil gives him a minute description of the infernal valley he has to pass through, ere he can reach the mount, where dwells the lady of his mind. His idea of turning *to the left* to explain the catholic pilgrimage, and hiding himself behind Anastasius' tomb, is another way of showing the before-mentioned resource, with the additional information that it took place after his exile from Florence. In short, by introducing the pagan bard of the empire, to propose that journey of catholicism to him, as a means of avoiding the persecution of the wolf, he shows *who* urged him to the deceit; by making him trace a plan of the catholic hell, under the shadow of the papal tomb, when yet scarcely out of Dis, he explains the circumstance which led him to adopt the design. Dante found two characteristics in Virgil, which made him select that poet for the guide of his pilgrimage — his style and his subject. In the first place, his pastorals are all figurative; they say one thing and mean another; and his Eneid is generally considered as belonging to the same class of writings. Now Dante, before he wrote his Commedia, had already composed some of the eclogues, of which two have come down to our days, as well as a part of the canzoniere, which treats of his love for the lady of the mind. All these are mysteriously written, and were much admired by those who understood the figurative style. And hence, in Inf. canto 1. he calls Virgil *his master* and *guide*, and tells him that from him he borrowed the style which has done him so much honour. And again, when his lady sends the bard of Augustus to deliver him from the wolf, it is with these words: "A friend, not of *Fortune*, but of mine, has met with an obstacle on his way to the mountain, and has gone back into the valley, for fear of the wolf; I trust to thee; go now, and with *thy flowery language* save him." In Virgil's Bucolick, are those words on which Dante lays so much stress — *Already returns the Virgin*, &c.; and in canto 22. of the Purgatory, he calls the Mantuan "the sovran of the pastoral song." In his time, those pastorals were always considered as mystical, and his anonymous interpreter mentions them as containing wonderful things. In a note to the seventh canto of the Purg. he says, that Virgil composed a book called the Bucolick, which treats of moral philosophy, and prophecies according to some art, (he does not explain what art,) &c. &c. Boccaccio, Landino, and others, speak of him in the same terms, and discover things of the greatest moment concealed under his shepherds' words. Having considered one of Virgil's qualities, let us now proceed to the other, which in Dante's estimation, was even more important.

If we turn from the poem of Alighieri, and open his volumes in prose, we shall better comprehend all his thoughts and feelings. How is Virgil therein mentioned?

always as the great bard of the Roman empire, and the best authority to prove its rights.

It is painful to observe how far this great man suffered himself to be blinded by his ruling passion; Virgil was for him the very fountain-head of politics, history, and philosophy, from whose verdict on sacred and all other knowledge there was no appeal; and a few of his verses were all that was requisite to settle the gravest points of the momentous question then pending between the Emperor and the Pope. A few examples will show that the words which Virgil put into the mouth of Jupiter, had as much weight for Dante, as the words of God in the Holy Bible have for us.

" Divine reason, and not force, was the origin of the Roman empire. And this is proved by two reasons; for God first created the imperial city, and then took it under his special protection. Virgil confirms this: when speaking in the person of God, in the first canto of the Eneid, he says: To them, that is, to the Romans, I have put no limits of time nor things: I have given them an empire without end."—(Convito. Treat. 4.)

In the Monarchia, book 1st, he says: " Our *divine poet*, Virgil, asserts, throughout the Eneid, that the glorious king Eneas was the father of the Roman people; and we refer to our poet for an account of his noble deeds."

When he seeks to prove that the Roman empire had a right to universal dominion, Virgil is brought forward to give the weight of his authority to the argument. Eneas was the great-grandson of Assaracus, an Asiatic; and his wife Creusa was a native of Asia: therefore the Roman empire, by descent and marriage, had a claim on Asia. Eneas was descended from Dardanus, a European, the son of Electra: therefore the Roman empire had a right to Europe. Eneas married Dido, an African queen: therefore the Roman empire had a right to Africa. Eneas conquered Turnus, an Italian king; and espoused Lavinia, the daughter of the king of Latium: therefore the Roman emperors, his descendants, have a double claim on Italy and Latium by conquest and marriage.

We are not informed whether, in the university of Bologna, where Dante studied, these opinions were held by the professors who made a god of the Emperor. But they serve to prove how far the frenzy of party spirit carried Alighieri, and they explain, in a great measure, the essence of his Virgil and of his poem. In order to show that we do not exaggerate, we cite some of his original words from the second book of the Monarchia. "As for his inheritance, Eneas was noble in every part of the world, both by descent and marriage. In Asia, by his immediate forefathers—Assaracus, and others, kings of Phrygia. Hence *our* poet, in the third book: Postquam rex Asiæ, &c."

"In Europe, by his progenitor, Dardanus: in Africa, through his ancestor, Electra. And, in his eighth book, *our poet* makes Eneas bear testimony to this fact:

"Our founder, Dardanus, as fame hath sung,
And Greeks acknowledge, from Electra sprung."
(Dryden's Virgil.)

"Our poet says that Dardanus was of European descent. The first wife of Eneas was Creusa, the Asiatic, Priam's daughter: the second was Dido, the African:* the third was Lavinia, a native of Italy, the daughter and heir of the king Latinus, and the mother of the Albans and Romans—if *our poet* speaks truly. These facts being proved, who will say that the father of the Roman people, and consequently the people themselves, are not noble under heaven? Is it not clear that a divine predestination was manifested in the person of him who was descended by blood from every part of the world?"

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* The anachronism, committed by Virgil, remained undiscovered until after Dante's death. We are indebted to Petrarch for our knowledge of the fact, that Dido lived some hundreds of years after Eneas.

In this treatise, (the Monarchia,) Electra, the mother of Dardanus, the Italian, is called the root of the Trojan branch, and the founder of the rights of Eneas over Italy; and Lavinia, the daughter and heir of Latinus, is said to have confirmed those rights to her Phrygian husband. And, in the poem which sings the rights of the Roman monarchy, Electra appears in an allegorical castle, with Eneas and Cesar in one group; and in another group appears Lavinia with Latinus, and Julia and other illustrious Roman ladies, their descendants; Virgil is the authority cited by Dante, in the treatise, to prove the rights of this august race; Virgil is the guide and master who shews him, in the poem, that same race, robbed of their lawful inheritance, in the kingdom of the usurper, and described by him as *suspended* in the kingdom where the Pope is Satan the prince, in a place called Limbo, where they are waiting the coming of the Redeemer, who is to free them from the bondage of Satan.—(See Inf. 4.)

We repeat once more, that these two works, the *Monarchia* and the *Commedia*, have but one sole aim in view. The first argues and reasons openly; the last, paints in mystic allegories; and, in both, it is Virgil who explains the secret and true meaning. The fact is, that Dante wrote two commentaries on the poem: one is the *Convito*, in the conventional tongue; the other is the *Monarchia*. We might add a third, viz.: the *Vita Nuova*, which, although very difficult to understand, is still more decisive than the others, when satisfactorily explained; and yet the world has sought for an interpretation of the divine Comedy! But let us return to Dante's chief authority and instructor.

Does he desire to recount the miracles which God wrought for the Roman people, in order to establish them in the empire of the universe? Virgil is brought forward to prove that the cry of a goose saved the Capitol from the Gauls; "for which our poet was grateful." Does he wish to celebrate the heroes, whose virtues paved the way for the empire—as Junius Brutus, Cincinnatus, Fabricius, Camillus, &c.?—Virgil appears again: "Our poet confirms this fact." "This hero is celebrated by our poet." "Whose glory is sung in the 6th book of our poet," &c. And, finally, he concludes: "All this sufficiently shows that the Roman people were by nature destined for empire. Therefore, when they became masters of the world, they only came into possession of their own right."—(B. 2.)

It is remarkable that Dante never calls any other poet by the title of *our poet*. When he speaks of God's miracles in favour of the Roman empire, and, among them, of the shield which fell from heaven, he says: "Of which miracle *Lucan* speaks." Again, when he is proving that the Romans subjugated all Asia: "*Ovid* mentions it." And "Every family is governed by its oldest member, as *Homer* says," &c. No; there is but one whom Dante calls *our poet;* and that is Virgil, the bard of the Roman empire, who furnished him with the materials to prove its rights in the Monarchia; whom he chose for his guide in the poem which sings those rights; who showed him all the miseries of that place where the Pope is Satan the prince; and who, finally, led him to the allegorical Beatrice, as to the end and aim of his journey.

The interpreters declare, in chorus, that Virgil is a figure of philosophy in general. But where do they find this? Let them point out, if they can, the place where Dante calls Virgil a philosopher. *His* philosopher was Aristotle, the oracle of the schools of that period, whom he calls, in the Convito, "the greatest of philosophers;" "the master of philosophers;" "that glorious philosopher, for whom nature displayed all her secrets;" "the guide of life and human reason;" and, in the Hell,

"The master of the sapient throng,
Seated amid the *philosophic* train."—(Canto 4.)

Not from their own ideas, but from the words of the author, should his interpreters explain the nature of a principal agent of the poem. The spirit of Dante should be sought for in his works; and from his life, opinions, passions, and misfortunes, should be extracted the essence of his allegorical Comedy. For is it not a natural supposition, that a man of irritable feelings and immovable firmness, when he saw himself condemned and proscribed, a beggar and a wanderer, and all because he was a Ghibelline, would pour out the bitterness of his soul, and cast himself into a very delirium of party spirit, in the work which he was composing while suffering under the miseries of exile, poverty, and unrelenting persecution? Is it at all credible that he would choose the shade of a worshipper of Jupiter to guide him to the Hell and Purgatory of the believers in Christ? Or, at all events, why not observe the prevailing genius of the time, and the practice of other poets in choosing their guides, in allegorical compositions of the same nature? Let us take Dante's own master, and one of his imitators, as examples. When Brunetto wrote of the changes in nature's works, he chose for his instructor, Ovid, the writer of the Metamorphoses; and when he treated of the heavenly bodies, he followed Ptolemy, the prince of astronomers.—(See the Tesoretto.) When Fazio degli Uberti took his imaginary journey over the world, to observe its various productions, climates, manners, and customs, he was accompanied by Solinus, who had already treated of these things. Pliny explained to him nature's different kingdoms; Ptolemy, the laws of the heavenly bodies. An Anachorite instructed him in morals, &c.—(See the Dittamondo.) And yet many, who are well acquainted with these allegorical works, tell us that the bard, who never wrote a syllable without a deep meaning, and who is acknowledged as superior to all of his own age, chose the poet of the Roman empire to accompany him on a visit to the Lucifer of the Scriptures, (whose name in all probability Virgil never heard), and also to introduce him to a beautiful Florentine lady, called Beatrice!

Were we told that an ardent partisan of the Roman empire had written an allegorical poem, and selected the bard of that empire for the guide of his symbolic journey, surely we should be able to give a very shrewd guess at the purpose for which such a poem was composed. Yet, strange to say, more than five hundred years have passed away since the Commedia was written; during which time, every endeavour has been made, by meditation, by researches, by commentaries, and by notes, in which every sentence, word, and syllable, has been analysed, in order to arrive at the truth, and not one step has been gained; although history tells us that, in those days, there was quite as much antipapal spirit as papal persecution; that every place was full of sectarians, punished by Rome; that many called, and believed the Pope really to be Lucifer, and made almost a god of the Emperor; and that, finally, all the learned (and Dante more ardently than the rest,) desired to see the whole peninsula united under this Emperor. To this, let us add the numberless hints and insinuations given by Dante himself in all his works. The two long comments, and the three keys which he left, all written by himself; and the decisive and solemn confession made in his last moments, which, engraven indelibly on his tomb, seems to reproach us for our doubts and unbelief, that whether travelling among the blessed, in Phlegethon, or in the infernal lakes, he sang the rights of the Monarchy. And all these proofs have availed nothing! What spell, what talisman, has been used? And do we flatter ourselves that the spell has been broken by us? No; it still lasts, and will for ever. And the writer of these pages, after the loss of much time, will find them, if read at all, considered as the work of a fanatic, who reasons from his own false ideas, and sees things which have an existence in his own distempered fancy only. Some will condemn him as arrogant, for pretending to interpret what so many learned persons have confessed themselves unable to understand: others will look upon him as an impious enemy of the Catholic church, who, not satisfied with being so himself, endeavours to bring in the most illustrious authors guilty of the same crime. But if the generality be thus enamoured of error, there are still some to whom truth is always welcome; and they will not refuse to listen when it is Dante who cries:

> "Jura Monarchiæ, Superos, Phlegetonta lacusque
> Lustrando, cecini, voluerunt fata quousque."*

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* Dante, as we before said, was ambiguous even on his death-bed. Those two active verbs (lustrando, cecini,) follow a string of accusatives, (jura, Superos, Phlegetonta, and lacusque); and hence many critics have asserted that, in this epitaph, he spoke of both the divine Comedy and the Monarchia; and that it should be read—Cecini Jura Monarchiæ; Cecini Superos, Phlegetonta, lacusque;—leaving the *lustrando* without any regimen. But is it likely that Alighieri would apply the verb *to sing* to a dry prose treatise; and rank a work, written in barbarous Latin, before the splendid poem which has immortalized him? To those who deny the authenticity of our construction—Lustrando Superos, Phlegetonta lacusque, cecini jura Monarchiæ—we can only say: "The world is blind; and thou, in truth, com'st from it."—(Purg. 16.)

CHAPTER XIV.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE PLATONIC LOVE.

Our former considerations, on the allegorical or real nature of the rival females of Dante's poem, were intended to prepare the way for our present reflections on the character of the love he bore to the Blessed One; as we have ascertained the nature of his journey by that of his guide. Neither will our analysis be lengthened unnecessarily by discussing this part of the subject, as it comprehends matters of the highest importance.

We presume that there will be no difficulty in allowing this fact, viz.: that there existed, in Dante's time, a secret society, which had extended itself throughout various countries of Europe; and whose proselytes were taught so well how to suit their actions to their words, that all of them were supposed to be sighing for some real lady; while, in fact, the object of their love was of the same nature as the allegorical Beatrice, of whom Dante was the reputed lover. Let this be granted, and we shall soon see that from this dissimulation arose that Platonic love which turned the heads of half the learned men of the time.

This secret society, which we shall call the *Love Sect*, was in being more than a century before Dante lived, but had produced nothing beyond a few stupid rhymers; and it remained for him to introduce a new method of instruction, by blending the language of religion with that of love, to deceive the world. We have abundant materials wherewith to explain the origin, extent, changes, language, and resources of this sect; and we have no doubt of being able to convince our readers of their truth.

The mystic language of this society was taught by means of a vocabulary, called the Grammar of the *Gay Science;* founded chiefly on ideas and words put in opposition to each other. The antithesis of *gay science* was *sad ignorance;* and, hence, *to be gay*, and *to be sad*, *to laugh*, and *to weep*, with all their respective synonimes and derivatives, signified to be a sectarian, or to be, on the contrary, a papalist. *Heart* meant the hidden secret;* *face*, the outward meaning; and *sighs*, the verses in this jargon, &c.

Before Dante lived, this *gay science* had fixed the foundation of its language on the two words, *love* and *hatred;* and all their attendant qualities followed on each side—pleasure and grief, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, sun and moon, life and death, good and evil, virtue and vice, courage and cowardice, mountain and valley, fire and frost, garden and desert, &c. To this list he added many scriptural words; such as God and Lucifer, Christ and Antichrist, angels and demons, paradise and hell, Jerusalem and Babylon, &c. &c.

Dante had already written many things in the erotic jargon, when the disasters which befel his own party obliged him to sue for the favour and protection of the adverse one. Although his altered fate had not changed his real opinions, yet he felt the necessity of expressing his ideas in the language of his potent enemy, and of thus conciliating each of the contending parties among whom he lived. His design was to deceive the Guelphs, by casting over his political sentiments the pompous garb of religion, and thus holding out a lure which would have made them interpret every thing in their own favour; while, to the Ghibellines, he would have intrusted the key which unlocked the veiled temple of his thoughts, and enabled him to express his opinions without danger. But, surely, it must have been with great reluctance that he determined on this artful line of conduct; for, on the one hand, he might have served the cause of the then prevailing superstition, which was dignified with the names of religion and piety; and, on the other, he ran the risk of offending those of his own party, who might not have been warned in time of his secret design. And these doubts did make him waver and hesitate, while he was composing the poem where *courtesy* plays the part of *piety*. But let us hear all this confirmed by himself in the conventional language.

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* "By *heart* I mean the inward secret."—(Convito.)

In the mysterious visions of the Vita Nuova, which is full of the new jargon, he writes: "The very noble Signore (Love), who rules over me by virtue of the sweetest lady, appeared to my imagination *as a pilgrim*, lightly covered with a *mean dress*."—(P. 14.) His meaning is evident: His imagination conceived the idea of an allegorical pilgrimage, mystically concealed under a papal dress. He then goes on to say, that this pilgrim, *Love*, appeared depressed, as though he had lost his power: "I thought he called to me, and said: I come from that lady who has long been thy defence, (the erotic Beatrice); and I bear with me the *heart* (the secret) which you received from her. I am carrying it to a lady who will defend thee, as she has done. He then named her to me, so that I knew her well. But, continued Love, if thou speakest of these words of mine, take care that it be in such a way that no one can discover the *feigned love* thou hast shewn to this one, (the first,) and which thou wilt do well to show to the other,* (the second). Having said this, he disappeared."—(P. 14.) He then tells us that, when Love vanished, he remained quite changed in his outward appearance: "I say what Love told me, but not *quite all*, for fear of disclosing my secret."

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* Here is a clear avowal, on the part of Dante, that his love for both ladies was feigned.

This secret (which we shall soon hear disclosed,) was the name of the new lady for whom he was to feign a passion: " Almost changed in my appearance, I *rode* (the same as the *travelling* of the poem,) that day very sadly, and accompanied by *many sighs;* and I began to seek that lady whom my lord had named to me in the *way of sighs*, (the poem). In a short time, I did make her my defence; but many spoke of it beyond the bounds of *courtesy*, and caused me thereby many sufferings. By reason of those outrageous speakers, who vilely slandered me, that loveliest person, who was the queen of virtue and the destroyer of vice, denied me her sweet presence, which had made every thing a blessing."—(P. 15.) Literally, that, by his deceit, the imperial party suspected him of being a papalist, and consequently looked coldly on him. And is this surprising, when, by his manner of writing, he deceived, and still continues to deceive, the world in general?

But let us hear more distinctly how he gave up his first visionary or erotic Beatrice; and turned, notwithstanding his fears, to the second and Catholic one.

Another vision soon followed the above-mentioned one. " When my blessing was denied me, I quitted my companions; and, oppressed with grief, I bathed the earth with *bitter tears* in my solitude.* And after begging for mercy from the lady of *courtesy*, † and crying: *Love* aid thy votary! I fell asleep, *weeping*."—(P. 16.) He informs us, in the Convito, that he dreamed in the Vita Nuova, intentionally: let us hear this dream.

Love appeared to him in a vision, and cried: My son, it is now time to leave off *our dissimulation;* ‡ and, so saying, he *wept* piteously. He then ordered him to make a ballad (the poem), and address his blessing, not *directly*, but *indirectly*—feigning to sing to another lady, but speaking to his own all the while; and to place, almost *in the middle*, some words, set off by sweet harmony, which might serve to assure the true lady of his real meaning. If we turn to the Commedia, we shall find, almost *in the middle* of it, the allegorical scene of the rival females, which shows his whole design. And, again, almost *in the middle* of the Vita Nuova, he explains the essence of all his fictions; as we shall show in another place. Dante, at Love's command, writes the ballad, and addresses it to Madonna, after bidding it seek that other whom Love had named to him in secret—"After thou hast sought *Piety*."

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* We have already mentioned the meaning conveyed by the word *to weep.*

† Or, as it should be read: Giving the name of Piety to Madonna Courtesy.

‡ A *feigned* love, he has already called his passion for both the first and second lady.

Piety, then, was the lady who was to be made his defence; and whom Love named to him in the *way of sighs*. Piety was the object of his feigned love; the lady whom he detested and pretended to adore, that he might be at peace with all the world. We shall hear his own confession.

He sends the ballad to plead his cause before Madonna Courtesy, whom he calls the *key of all piety*; "Madonna, he who sends me to thee, desires that, when it shall be thy pleasure to understand me, thou wilt do so. Love for thee, has made him appear *outwardly* changed; but, although it has caused him to turn to another (Piety), believe me, his heart has never wandered from thee."

"I tell my ballad where it may go, and in what company it should travel, if it would avoid danger. I dismiss it, with a recommendation to throw itself into the *arms of Fortune* (synonimous with *Piety*). Some will say that they cannot understand why I should speak in the *second* person, (to the *second* lady, as a means of addressing the *first*); since the ballad is nothing but the words I write, and not a lady. But it is my intention, even in this book, to solve all these mysteries; and then let those, who most doubt, *hear me.*

And then he goes on to say: " After this vision, my mind was distracted by many thoughts; of which four, in particular, destroyed the peace of my *life.* One was this: It is good to submit to Love; because it draws the heart from wickedness. Another was: It is not good to submit to Love; because the more faithful its subjects are, the more painful are the trials they have to undergo.* The third was: The name of Love is so sweet to the ear, that it seems impossible its reality can be otherwise. The last was: The lady whom thou lovest is not like others, who are easily banished from the *heart.* Each of these thoughts struggled so within me, that I felt like one who wishes to go on, but knows not which *way* to take. I would fain have found out some *way* to reconcile one with the other, but could not; and I was therefore obliged to throw myself into the *arms of Piety.* While in this state, I felt a great desire to write some verses; and accordingly composed this sonnet.—

" Every thought speaks of Love; but their variety torments me. One reminds me of his *power;* another recalls his *valour;* a third brings sweet hopes; a fourth makes me often *weep.* But all agree in urging me to call upon *Piety,* trembling with the fear that is in my heart.† I know not on what subject to dwell: fain would I speak, but I can scarce tell what to say; and so I go wandering in Love's mazes. I desire with all to agree; and, to do this, I must call my enemy, *Madonna Piety,* my defender.

" I say that, wishing to speak of Love, I know not where to begin the subject; and, if I do venture on it, I must call my enemy *Madonna Piety;* and I say *Madonna, in scorn.*"—(P. 16 to 20.)

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* Cecco d'Ascoli, and thousands of others, prove this fact.

† And where else can fear be? Dante means to say that he trembled for his *sectarian secret.*

" *Time* is to be considered, for the sake both of the speaker and the hearer: if the first be ill-disposed, his words may be very hurtful; and if the last be so, he will take in bad part what is really meant well. And therefore Solomon said wisely: There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak. I felt an inclination to speak of *Love*, but I thought it better to wait; for time carries with it the end of all our desires. If we could trace back the origin of all our troubles, we should find that they have arisen from our ignorance of the value of time." This he says in the Convito (P. 103); where he also writes, that, desiring to sing of Love, and of that lady who was the daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, he had recourse to an expedient. These are his words: " I shewed my own condition under a figure of other things. No rhyme was worthy to speak *openly* of the *lady of my heart;* nor were my readers well-disposed enough to comprehend my words, unless they had been feigned. They would not have believed the true meaning so well as the false one; because they thought that I really felt a sincere, and not a feigned passion."—(P. 129.) And so has it always been, in spite of his declaration, that, when he wished to speak of Love, he was obliged to call his enemy Madonna Piety. We may add, that he did it to outrage that enemy, while he was pretending to honour him.

Now, we can better understand the bitter scorn, which we noticed in the Convito, for the Catholic veil which he threw over the grand allegory of the poem; and the kind of *disgrace* from which he wished to clear himself. And let us not forget, that the *way*, and the *way of sighs*, of which he makes mention so frequently, is the *poem*.

If there can be any excuse for Dante's profanation, it must be sought for in the fatal necessity of calming the cruel spirit of persecution, which in those ages was rife against the secret societies. Their first or erotic language had been partly interpreted by some of their powerful adversaries, who obtained a key to it, either through the malice of intruders, the weakness of the fearful,* or the perfidy of apostates.† From this discovery, ensued cruel persecutions, from which Dante himself did not escape, and hence seeking safety in profaneness, he spoke outwardly to Madonna Piety, and secretly to Madonna Courtesy; and wrote: "This rhetorical figure is very expressive, and even *necessary*, when the words are addressed to one person, and the meaning to another. This figure is both beautiful and useful, and may be called *dissimulation;* it is like the plan of that wise general who attacked the castle on one side, to draw away its defenders from the other." (Conv. Treat. 2. ch. 10.) So he made war on Piety, that Love might be secure from her attacks. He alone stood and boldly faced the formidable enemy, during the allegorical night which succeeded, while all the others fled like scared animals; hence we read in the very first steps he took on his long *way of sighs:*

> Now was the day departing, and the air
> Imbrown'd with shadows, from their toils releas'd
> *All animals on earth;* and *I alone*
> Prepar'd myself the *conflict to sustain,*
> Both of sad Pity, [*qu.* Piety] and that perilous *road,*
> Which my unerring memory shall retrace.
> O Muses! O high genius! now vouchsafe your aid. (Inf. 2.)

There are still extant between Dante and his friend Cino, a member of the same Love sect, and an exile from his native land, two sonnets which relate to our present inquiries. In the first, Dante laments the fate which condemns him to dwell among a people, the enemies of *Love* and *erotic* language, and informs his friend that he has had recourse to the language of *piety;* and Cino, in his reply, exhorts him to preach the *good* in the kingdom of devils, since he is forbidden to speak of *Love*, in the kingdom of lovers. We have already said that, in the *gay science*, good and evil were synonimous with love and hatred.

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* Such as Bracciarone of Pisa, of whom we shall speak elsewhere.

† See ch. 2. where we spoke of Ivan of Narbonne.

DANTE TO HIS FRIEND.

Poich' io non trovo chi con me ragioni
 Del Signor *cui serviamo e voi ed io,*
 Conviemmi soddisfare il gran desio
 Ch' io ho di dire i pensamenti boni.
Null' altra cosa, appo voi m' accagioni
 Del lungo e del nojoso tacer mio;
 Sono in loco ove sono ch' è sì rio,
 Che 'l Ben non trova chi albergo gli doni.
Donna non c' è ch' amor le venga al volto,
 Nè uomo ancora che per lei sospiri,
 E chi 'l facesse saria detto stolto.
Ahi, Messer Cino, come il tempo è volto,
 A danno nostro, e de li nostri diri,
 Da poi che 'l Ben ci è sì poco ricolto !

"I find none here with whom I can speak of *the Lord* whom we both serve; and therefore with thee I must gratify my earnest desire to communicate *my good thoughts.* Attribute not my long silence to any other cause ; I am now dwelling in a place of wickedness, where good would seek a shelter in vain ; here are no ladies whose *faces* beam with love, no men to *sigh* for them ;* such sighs would be deemed folly. Ah Cino! Good is now coldly welcomed, and the time is unfriendly to us *and our language.*"

This sonnet was written at the time when both they and their language had nothing but persecution to expect ; the expressions throughout it, such as—I find none with whom I can talk of love ; neither do *men* sigh for *ladies,*— are entirely allegorically ; as in no country in the world is this ever likely to be the case, and even were it so, that is no reason why Dante should have lamented that the time was against their language, and that *Good* or *Love* could find none to shelter him. The fact is, that what they called *Good* was persecuted by its opposite *Evil*, who wielded those mighty weapons which, when hurled from the Vatican, rarely failed to produce confusion and dismay in the ranks of his adversaries. But let us hear the

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* Sighs—the verses in the conventional tongue.

ANSWER OF CINO TO HIS FRIEND.

Dante, io non odo in qual albergo suoni
  Il *Ben* che da ciascun messo è in obblio;
  E sì gran tempo che di qua fuggio
  Che del contrario son nati li tuoni.
E per le variate condizioni
  Chi 'l *Ben* facesse non risponde al fio,
  Il *Ben* sai tu che predicava Dio,
  E non tacea nel regno de' Demoni.
Dunque se al *Bene* ogni reame è tolto
  Nel mondo, in ogni parte ove tu giri,
  Vuomi tu fare ancor di piacer molto?
Diletto fratel mio, *di pene involto*,
  Mercè per quella Donna che tu miri,
  Di dir non star, se di fè non sei sciolto.

"Dante, I have no means of hearing where thou art now chaunting that *Good* which seems almost forgotten. It is so long since it left this place; and the thunders of its opposite (Evil) have superseded it; and things are so changed that those who might *do much good* come not up to our expectations.* Thou knowest right well that God never gave over preaching *Good* in the kingdom of Demons.† Therefore, though *Good* be driven out of every realm, still wherever thou goest, fail not to pleasure me by singing it. O my beloved brother, by the lady whom thou beholdest, I pray thee, in the midst of all thy troubles,[*] never so long as thy faith is dear to thee, to relax thy efforts."[†]

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* That is, do not satisfy our vengeance, by punishing him who is the main cause of evil in the kingdom of devils.

† This mystic expression signifies, that according to their belief, Christ preached nothing in the kingdom of the Devil, "the prince of this world," but that *Good* or *Love*, taken in its widest sense.

The request of Cino was granted by the Florentine. In the Convito, where he very evidently speaks of his allegorical poem, although he dares not name it openly, we read as follows: "I here declare that the lady with whom I fell in love, after my first love,[‡] was the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the emperor of the universe, called by Pythagoras *Philosophy*. (P. 139.) And when I became the friend of this lady, whose *real nature* I have here confessed, I began to love and to hate, according as she loved or hated. Therefore, as she loved the followers of *truth* and hated the followers of *error* and *falsehood*, so did I.[§] Every thing is in itself loveable; it is only through the working of malice that things become hateful; therefore according to reason, we should avoid and hate, not the things, but the malice. This is the very thing that my most excellent Lady desires, and in her dwell both reason and virtue. Following her example therefore, I abhorred and despised the errors of the people; and to avoid idleness which is very displeasing to her, and expose the *error* which allures away her friends, I determined to warn those who were pursuing *the wrong path* (in order that they might re-enter the straight one,) and for that purpose I began a canzone[‖] in these words:

"I must now give up those sweet rhymes of Love which for so long have filled my every thought; perhaps I may return to them once more, but my lady's proud and disdainful looks* have deprived me of all power of singing in my own usual style (of love.) Here then I lay aside my soft verses with a hope that better times may come and enable me once again to celebrate *Love.* I commence by invoking that Lord who dwells in the eyes of my lady, because she is enamoured of herself."†

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[*] It appears by these words that Dante had already commenced his pilgrimage through the regions of Hell.

[†] See these sonnets in the poetical works of Cino, p. 112. Pisa 1813.

[‡] After his first or erotic fiction for Beatrice.

[§] We must bear always in mind the secret meaning of the words *Truth* and *Error* in the Gay Science. Of the Lady *Truth* who dwells in the third heaven with the princes of Piety, covered with the three-coloured veil of Error (white, green and red,) we shall speak elsewhere.

[‖] The poem is here alluded to, but he quotes a canzone which relates to it.

"In this canzone I design to bring the world back again to the *right way*.‡ I say, then, that for the present I must give up those sweet rhymes of love which have been hitherto the vehicles of my thoughts; and I assign a reason for so doing: It is with no intention of abandoning the subject of love, but because *my lady* is so changed *in appearance*, that at present I have not the power of talking about it. By this, I do not mean to say that she is really disdainful or proud, but only that she *appears* so." (Treat. 4.) These new appearances of *Piety*, shown by his lady *Courtesy*, and her *seeming* actions, forbade him to continue his discourse on *love*, and caused him to profane the catholic doctrine, and disguise himself throughout the Divine Comedy in the garb of a papalist. In the very moment when he decided on this conduct, the lady of his mind, Beatrice, died.

It is an historical fact that, on the death of Pope Clement V., which happened a few months after that of Henry VII., Dante wrote a Latin letter to the Italian cardinals, in which he exhorted them to choose a native pope, who would transfer the pontifical see from Avignon to Rome. The writing of that letter stamped Dante as a partisan of popery in Italy, in the opinion of the public and of the cardinals. And at the very point of time when he wrote that letter, in which he gave the latter the pompous titles of Princes of the World and Princes of the Earth, titles which Pius II. afterwards confirmed to them by a bull — in that same moment in which Dante, writing to those princes of the earth, presented himself to the public in the disguise of a papalist, did Beatrice die.

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* Madonna Courtesy had put on the appearances of her enemy, Madonna Piety.

† The meaning of this last mysterious expression, will be explained hereafter.

‡ See Hell, canto 1. where the wolf prevents Dante's ascent to the symbolic mount, to which he is afterwards guided by Virgil.

We will here cite the beginning of his letter to the cardinals, and afterwards that passage of the Vita Nuova, which announces the death of Beatrice.

" The letter of Dante, the Florentine, to the Italian cardinals."

" How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! The avarice of the princes of the Pharisees, which made the ancient priesthood odious, not only deprived the people of the administration of the Levitical law, but caused the destruction of the city of David,"* &c. He applies this to Rome, comparing that city with Jerusalem; and describing its miserable condition, owing to the removal of the seat of government.

In the 47th and following pages of the Vita Nuova, we read the following words, preceded by the very same quotation from Jeremiah. " The Lord of Justice summoned that beautiful lady to give praise, under the banners of that blessed queen Mary, whose *name* was held in great reverence in the *language* of the holy Beatrice. After the departure of that lovely one, the above-mentioned city † remained as a widow, spoiled of all dignity. And I, *weeping* amidst her desolation, wrote to the *princes of the earth* of her sad condition, beginning with these words of the prophet Jeremiah: How doth the city, &c. &c. I say this, that no one may wonder why I have quoted these words, as an entrance, as it were, to the *new matter* which follows.* If any one blame me for not writing down the words which come after that quotation, I excuse myself by declaring that my original intention was to write in *Italian* only; and seeing that what follows that quotation is in *Latin*, I should have departed from that intention had I cited it." And so it was in Latin; for he here speaks of the letter which he wrote to the cardinals, concerning the desolate city of Rome. Had he passed beyond the words of Jeremiah, his artifice would have been discovered; and that was the only reason which made him pause where he did.

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* This letter, which is still extant among the manuscripts in the Riccardiana, at Florence, was first cited by Troya in his Veltro; and afterwards quoted throughout by the German writer, Witte.

† We look in vain throughout the Vita Nuova for the name of this city.

Perhaps we shall be told, that Dante wrote two Latin letters, and began both with the same words from Jeremiah: one to the cardinals, *princes of the earth*, for the purpose above-named; and another to the *princes of the earth* in general, to inform them that the wife of Simon de' Bardi, the Florentine lady of whom he was enamoured, (according to his biographers,) was dead. If he did so, we can only say, that those who assert the fact must bring forward some very strong evidence to counteract our conviction of his insanity. He tells us, in this same place, that his Beatrice was the number 9; that is, by similitude, *the adorable Trinity*, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*. Was the wife of Simon this likewise?

We are not now speculating on fantastic theories; we are offering facts which are undeniable; and the truth of which will be acknowledged by all those who will give themselves the trouble to inspect the authentic testimonials on which we found them. To those few, who presume to pronounce a decisive opinion without any means of verifying it, we say, that we speak to the *living* and not to the *dead*. "*To live*, in man, is to use reason; therefore, if life be essential to man, (that is, the use of reason,) whoever uses it not, *is dead.*"—(Dante.)

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* *The new matter,* which he adopted in the Vita Nuova, signifies the substitution of the sacred for the amatory style.

But what do those words mean, that when he pretended to be a papalist, his lady died? To this question, we might answer, that Dante has already explained their meaning; we might say, that as the Pope was, in this language, considered as the chief of the dead, so those who submitted to him were dead likewise, and those were the people of the dead whom Dante went in imagination to visit; but on the contrary, we declare that these words are a mystery; and, when we discover their true meaning, and see the number of ladies who died *at the first hour of the day*, and left their lovers to *weep piteously* and *laugh cruelly* at Madonna Piety, we shall find that those delightful persons were all chimeras of fancy, who will vanish before the realities of a very dry theory, which does but little honour to those tender lovers who were left behind to *weep*, in obedience to the precepts of the Gay Science.* Then we shall understand why the outward man remained to *weep* outwardly, and the inward man to *laugh* inwardly; and why he *laughed* within, and *wept* without, after he had swallowed the volume written *within* and *without*.

We shall not, in this place, stop to analyse the mystery of the three-coloured veil, which covered the lady called *Truth*, and the *Palladium*. This palladium was carefully guarded, and entrusted to the princes of piety, who were angels dwelling in the *third heaven* on earth, the very place to which Beatrice, Laura, Fiammetta, Selvaggia, Teresa, Clori, Alete, and all the other ladies who so fatally and methodically died before their lovers, ascended, if we may believe the testimony of those lovers.

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* In that part of the Vita Nuova, where he relates the death of Beatrice, the very indifference with which he mentions it would be sufficient to prove that death a fiction. He coolly gives the information, and then says that she was a 9, divided into three parts, 3 times 3, and that he wrote a Latin letter to the Princes of the Earth, of which he can only cite the beginning.

This mysterious female, the type of a perfect monarchy with all its members, beginning from the head, this much-desired New Jerusalem, had no existence except in the *minds* of her lovers, and therefore she was called by them the *lady of their minds*. These lovers confessed themselves in *error* when they made religion a cloke for politics; but at the same time they declared that *error* to be indispensable for their own safety. We have said before that, in their allegorical language, *error* was synonymous with *death*, and *truth* with *life*; and, from these words, come such expressions as: to be in error *or* to be dead — to fall into error *or* to die, &c. &c. This was all borrowed from the sects of antiquity; for instance, the Pythagoreans raised a tomb to those proselytes who fell into *error*, and declared them to be *dead*. And we might cite numerous examples from the Scriptures to shew the frequent application of the same language. St. John says to a man who had fallen into *error*, "Thou hast a name that thou *livest* and art *dead*." And Ezekiel declares that "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." In later times, Figueiras dismissed his satirical lay with these words: "Go, Sirvente, and tell the false priest that whoever submits to his dominion is *dead*." Now the very moment that the soul of Dante, which contained within itself the idea of a perfect monarchy, which he called Beatrice, submitted to that dominion, Beatrice *died;* and hence the letter, which shews him apparently subject to it, is the very one which announces her death. The word *dead* was therefore applied indiscriminately to those who submitted to the emperor of the realm of sorrow, and to those who dwelt in his kingdom, called the kingdom of *death;* whether they did so from choice, or from an indispensable necessity.

We have every reason to suppose that Dante made use of the circumstances which induced him to write that letter, in order to shew what he really meant by the death of his lady; and we have no doubt that he meditated the great design of changing the mystic language of a lover into that of a catholic before his exile, although he did not put it into execution until after that exile took place, that is, between the years 1304 and and 1311, while he was wandering about in a state of poverty and distress. These years, so pregnant with misery for Dante, were also fatal to the great family of the Templars, from whom the most important of the Secret Societies boasts its descent. A solemn circular, which was drawn up by the chief rulers of that society, and despatched to all the brethren throughout the world, contains the following words: "From the year of our Lord 1304 to 1311, very extraordinary discoveries were made in our order, and the occurrences which then took place render that period one of the *highest importance* in our history; it was a period dear to the heart of every brother who is zealous for the cause of his order, his country, and his God."

These figurative dead persons remained in expectation of that great day, when the *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*, after judging the *woman* and destroying Babylon, would recall them all to a new life, and make them to dwell in the New Jerusalem. Hence, among this people of the dead, who were buried in the temple of Love,* it was considered a merit to have renounced *life* and accepted *death ;* for piety was in them *alive* in secret, and *dead* in public; this is the true idea of the Inferno, where many figurative anti-papalists appear disguised in the garb of their adversaries ; and

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* See Dante and Beatrice, Petrarch and Laura, and many other couples of fictitious lovers, who were buried in the Temple of Love — a species of allegorical drama of the fifteenth century.

Dante himself writes of this Hell: "Here Piety is *alive* when she appears most *dead*." (Inf. 20.)

Those who were tossed about in the whirlwind of Guelphic persecution, were compelled to feign themselves papalists, and to follow that Babylonish Semiramis who ruled over *people* and *nations*. Thus did Dante, when he declared himself reduced to *die of piety;* and the necessity was furthermore increased when, as sometimes happened, their emperor of the universe abandoned them to their fate. When, in canto 5. of the Inferno, Dante arrives among those whom he calls carnal sinners, he beholds them in crowds, dashed about by the infernal tempest, which knows no calm. He turns in anxiety and alarm towards his guide: "Master, who are these?" and Virgil tells him that the first, she who is in the front of the rest, was an empress of many nations, her name *Semiramis;* from their own mouths he hears the miserable tale of these unhappy beings, who are forced to follow the Babylonish woman; and, when he addresses himself to two of them in particular, while one is relating her unhappy story, the other weeps bitterly.

> "While thus one spirit spake,
> The other *wail'd* so sorely, that heart-struck,
> I through compassion fainting, seem'd not far
> From *death*, and like a *corse* fell to the ground."

In this same canto, he writes that, when these wretched spirits arrived before the *ruin*, they wept and groaned, and uttered curses against the *king of the universe;* and for this they had some cause, for very often *Piety* was their only resource, and they were obliged to range themselves under the banners of *Semiramis*, when they found that that king, instead of befriending them, forsook them in their hour of need. It was on one of these occasions that Dante cried to him who was in heart and mind a German — " O German Albert, thou hast abandoned her who for thee has become *savage!* thou and thy father have allowed the garden of the empire (the earthly paradise) to be turned into a desert. Come, cruel, and see the misery of thy people ; and if that will not move thee, come and blush for thine own bad renown." (Purg. 6.)

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE VARIETY OF FIGURES EMPLOYED TO EXPRESS ONE OBJECT.

Our endeavours to explore the dark ways of antiquity, and to clear them from the phantoms which haunt them, have led us on to forget that those who follow us may require some rest from their labours. Here, then, let us pause, and unbend our minds with reflections of a lighter, although not less important character, and we shall be afterwards enabled to prosecute our journey with renewed vigour.

If the queen of Babylon, the woman of Babylon, the wolf of the dark forest, the Lucifer of the abyss, the queen of endless woe, Hecate, Proserpine, or Luna, all express, in Dante's figurative poem, one and the same object, viz. the Pope, the vocabulary of the Gay Science must have fixed on various symbols and words to be explanatory of the same idea. The writers in this language prove, by their works, that such was the case, and all recommend the practice of describing one thing by different figures: their great authority was the Holy Bible — in the prophets they sought and found precedents without number, and throughout that Sacred Volume they recognized our promised Redeemer, and the enemy of the human race, both presented under many and various emblems. But the poem employs even more figures than we have mentioned above, to represent the same person. We see him as Plutus, *the cursed wolf*, who rules over the avaricious, and cries, *the Pope is Satan.* We see him as the three-headed Cerberus, who, with his sharp claws and greedy throat, tears and devours the spirits; and we behold him as the triple Geryon, who is stationed at the bridges of fraud, with the face of a righteous man, and the body of a serpent. An ancient critic, who had penetrated very deeply into the nature of the poem, observed that Dante laboured particularly to conceal the drift of this dangerous idea, with respect to Geryon. "He uses," (says this Jacopo Mazzoni, in his defence of the Commedia, b. 2. ch. 37.), "more comparisons here than elsewhere to draw the reader far from his real meaning; and, for that purpose, in less than fifty verses we find six similes."

Even the extravagances which are occasionally met with in the poem, were committed because they were necessary for this purpose. Were we to describe the infernal regions, and to place side by side, with such known sinners as Cain and Judas, any beings totally imaginary, whose existence was only in the fancy of a writer of comedies or romances, such as the Tartuffe of Molière, or the Lovelace of Richardson, &c., should we not deserve such reproaches as the following: — Why lessen our belief in what you say of real personages by associating them with the fancies of a tale? Were real sinners not to be found in the world, that you have had recourse to fictitious ones? The very same thing has been said to Dante, because, while history speaks of a too-celebrated Thais of Macedonia, he preferred taking for his subject the ideal Thais of Terence, and making his guide point her out with the most marked solemnity. And then with what bitter scorn he treats her! Why did he choose that fictitious person, and waste on an unreal object so much acrimony? Because one single line of the comedy serves to identify her with the original figure of the poem: "*Pape* superat ipsam *Thaidem*." Virgil tells him — "With thine eyes," (the symbol of understanding), "look into the face of this worthless sinner, who is clawing herself with her nails; now she crouches down in subjection, and now stands erect in her pride; that is *Thais* answering her lord." Now let us recollect how Boniface VIII. trampled on Philip the Fair, and how in after years Clement V. cringed to the power of that same monarch, and we shall not fail to recognize those two popes in the Thais, and the king of France in her lord; and to understand that this one line of Terence,—"*Pape* superat ipsam *Thaidem*," induced Dante to prefer the dramatic to the historical Thais. In order that we may not mistake for a moment the person for whom this Thais was designed, she is described as seated over the waters, and those waters are loathsome and fetid, to show the estimation in which Dante held the subjects of the Pope. (See Inf. canto 18.)

The same language which allowed its writers to give so many names to their one detested enemy, gave them also the liberty of figuring the lady of their mind, their fondly desired blessing, under different appellations; and hence, in different poets, we meet with her as Beatrice, Laura, Fiammetta, Selvaggia, Mandetta, Nina, Bechina, &c. &c.; and hereafter, when we fully unveil the mysteries of Platonic love, we shall show by what a train of deceptive appearances the world was beguiled into the belief, that each of these names belonged to a real female, whose charms were celebrated by an admiring lover.

Surely we can now comprehend that the means which this *sect of love* found more efficacious than any other to delude its enemies, was that of describing the same object in different places, and figuring it under different appearances and names. When we recognize the Pope in the woman of the Revelations, do we consider at the same time, that she whom we behold on the summit of the highest mountain of purgatory, we have already seen in hell, in the lowest pit of the abyss, as Semiramis, Thais, Lucifer, Plutus, Geryon and Cerberus? and the same applies to the opposite character. When we read of God and Christ in the highest heaven, both thus distinct from Beatrice, how can we ever imagine that the names of those two ineffable beings are profaned by being made the figures of a poem? If we are ignorant of the secrets of this language of mysteries, if we know not that Beatrice is (by Dante's own declaration) a being distinct in three persons, we may build as many conjectures as we will — they will all fall to the ground. Neither does the difficulty end here. The car on which the mystic Beatrice advances, is drawn by the griffon, half lion, half eagle, a figure of the double nature of Christ. How can it be, that the incarnate Word is figured in the female, while he is drawing the car? If we have not preserved the guiding-thread which has been given to us by the treatises written in this jargon— if we have not had the patience to read them attentively, and compare them one with another; and if, having read them, we cannot see that, notwithstanding their diversity of appearance, they all contain the same internal meaning, we shall remain in ignorance for ever; and for us, the griffon and Beatrice will always be as different in reality, as they appear at the first glance to be distinct; although Dante has declared that his eyes saw Beatrice, *who is one person in two natures.*

The griffon, half eagle, half lion, is figurative of divinity and humanity, and signifies the double government of religion and politics, as founded by Christ and Cæsar; and the mystic lady transforms herself into either being in this way: — she gazes steadfastly on the griffon, who is reflected in her eyes the *image of herself;* and in the meanwhile, the four cardinal, and the three theological virtues, lead the poet to behold the eyes of the lady. The four on the left, show him within those eyes the human nature, and the three on the right the divine nature of the griffon; so that he sees at once Cæsar and Christ, the ruler of the political, the chief of the religious world.

> "A thousand fervent wishes riveted
> Mine eyes upon her beaming eyes, that stood
> Still *fix'd toward the Gryphon*, motionless.
> As the sun strikes a mirror, even thus
> Within those orbs *the twyfold being* shone;
> For ever varying, in one figure now
> Reflected, now in other. Reader! muse
> How wondrous in my sight it seem'd, to mark
> *A thing*, albeit steadfast in itself,
> Yet in its imaged semblance mutable." (Purg. 31.)

He calls it *the thing*, to avoid declaring it either the griffon or Beatrice. Here we see the union of the *lady*, or the soul of the sectarian, with the object beloved — "Love *truly* taken and *deeply* considered, is nothing but the union of the *soul* with the *thing beloved*." (Convito.) This union is called allegorically the marriage between Christ and the soul, and therefore Beatrice is saluted as *the bride of the lamb*.

We now proceed to further and most important considerations, premising that, in another and more suitable place, we intend, in an interpretation of the whole of the Vita Nuova, and a great part of the Convito, to explain most fully, through Dante himself, every thing that we have here, perhaps too briefly introduced.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON ALLEGORICAL PILGRIMAGES.

Without seeking to justify Dante, we may say, and with truth, that the introduction of the sacred doctrines into the language of allegory owes not its invention to him. He merely adopted and introduced the practice among the imperial sect; who, before his time, had been wont to sing the sentimental adventures of lovers only: but the original use of those doctrines dates from a very remote period. Many abuses, consequent upon it, appear to have sprung up in the course of time, particularly among the Manichæans and Gnostics; but still it prevailed; and, spreading by means of the Paulicians from the east to the west, it gradually extended itself into Spain, Provence, and Italy, where it took root, and stretched out branches innumerable. The information gleaned by historians, concerning the vicissitudes of this language, is confirmed by the works of its mystic writers. Of those works, it is our intention now to examine a few, the productions of different countries. We have selected one, composed before Dante's time; some, written by his contemporaries; and others, after his death, by his imitators, or interpreters. The first will show that this mixed language was in use out of Italy; the others will point out the land whence it came to her. The one will tell us that the disguise of religion was assumed to allure the simple and ignorant, (always the most devoted to the Pope,) and to convert them into so many co-operators in the great design; the others will confirm this idea; and will show us, moreover, that, by using that disguise, the members of the sect freed themselves from the persecutions which had before afflicted them.

The following is a short summary of an ancient French *fabliau*, of the thirteenth century, called—The Confession of the Fox, and his pilgrimage to Rome.

The fox, professing the greatest contrition for past misconduct, went about preaching holiness everywhere; and appeared so anxious to change his way of life, and so sincere in his good resolutions, that he induced a lamb and an ass to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome in his company, for the purpose of making a full confession of sins at the Pope's feet. Behold them, then, all three, on their way to the holy city, with staff and rocket, and every proper appearance of humility and penitence. But, instead of taking his companions to Rome, as he assured them he would, the crafty fox led them into the wolf's den. Did he mean, by so doing, to entice them to their ruin? By no means: so well did he manage, that, by his own ingenuity, aided as it was by the almost involuntary co-operation of the others, the wolf was destroyed, whilst exulting over his imaginary prey. The fox directed, and his simple friends followed his counsel; and with such good effect, that the fierce animal was left with his head crushed between two gates, his mate was put to flight, and all their attendant wolves were dispersed or destroyed. After this, the three holy pilgrims returned home, safe and sound, delighted with their exploit; and what is more, exempt from the payment of a certain tribute to Rome, of which, after their victory, we hear no more. The object, then, of the pilgrimage of these pious travellers was threefold, viz.: to crush the wolf's head, to put his female to flight, and to destroy his followers; and they also vanquished a natural impossibility, by making a lamb slay a wolf. In imitation of this, we read in Petrarch: "Your meek and gentle lamb destroys the fierce wolves." And Dante, persecuted by the Guelphs, styled himself a lamb, a foe to the wolves who made war upon him, &c. This fable furnishes us with another instance of the conventional language explaining itself, as Dante explained the secret meaning of his poem by the Convito, and other prose works. Those who had learnt the vocabulary, knew that the Pope was called a wolf, and that the Church was his spouse, and their devotees wolves also; therefore, when they read these fables, they guessed the design of the authors who wrote them, and were never deceived by the devout and Catholic expressions put into the mouths of foxes, lambs, or asses.

But, on the other hand, it was impossible for those, who were altogether ignorant of the language, to enter into the spirit of these tales; because even the names of the animals were altered. The wolf was called *Isangrin*, his female *Hersant*, the sheep *Belin*, and the ass the *Archpriest Bernard*.—(See the collection of ancient *fabliaux*, by Legrand d'Aussy, vol. ii. p. 413.) The first two names, *Isangrin* and *Hersant*, meaning the Pope and his church, are met with in a great many ancient romances; one of which, called *Renard* and *Isangrin*, was written in Dante's time, and translated from the original French into English, German, Latin, and Dutch. The very first company of French comedians played it as a mystery, (the name given to all their ancient pieces,) before the Guelphic monarch, Philip the Fair; and the destroyer of the Templars considered it as something intended merely for his amusement. The mystery finished with the triumph of the fox, who killed *Isangrin*, and was made pope;—the very aim of the sect. *Woe to the clergy!* if *they fall*, a *new order of priests will arise*—was the mysterious threat held out in the time of Frederic the Second.

Another romance of the same nature, and still more ancient, called *Le Nouveau Renard*, was written by the Trouveur Jaquemais Gielée, about the year 1289. The fox is here at war with the *lion* instead of with the *wolf*. ("Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about.") After some time, he pretends to be reconciled to him; and having drawn over the clergy to his side, he makes his two sons friars: one, a Franciscan, the other, a Dominican: the two orders who composed the Inquisition. Finally, he goes to Rome, where he is favoured by Fortune; and, eventually becomes pope.—(See Legrand d'Aussy, Fabliaux, vol. 2. p. 413.) That part of the tale which relates to the fox's sons will be fully explained hereafter.

All the ancient romances, cited by Dante in his poem, are of the same nature.—(Inf. 5. 31. 32. Purg. 26. Par. 16.) And in corroboration of our opinion of their real meaning, we shall elsewhere show that the catechisms of the sect figured it as a fox, who went first to the *ape*, and then to the *lion*, and then to the *pelican*, and finally to the *dove;* to signify that cunning led it to have recourse first to imitation, and then to force: the last two emblems being figurative of the object in view.

There is not an iota of difference between the fox's pilgrimage to Rome, which finished at the wolf's den, and Dante's pilgrimage to the Abyss, which ended in the figurative Babylon. If the first entered that den to crush the wolf's head, Dante descended into the abyss to do the Pope an equal service. And the same design formed the groundwork of a vast number of poetical journeys, which, when described by travellers of ingenuity and talent, concealed the only purpose for which they were undertaken.

The principal sects of those times may be reduced to three, viz.: the Templars, the Albigenses, and the Ghibellines; who, with one consent, although with different ends in view, conspired together against the Pope. The fact of entering one of those sects was expressed by a symbolic pilgrimage. For instance: to go to the Temple of St. John, in Jerusalem; or to that of St. James, in Galicia; or to St. Peter's, at Rome; signified to become a proselyte either of the society of the Templars, or of the Albigenses, or of the Ghibellines. The first were called *palmers*, the second *pilgrims*, and the last *Romei*. Dante's principles were those of the last sect; but he made use of many of the symbols and doctrines of the others in his poem; because, being decidedly antipapal, they rendered great services both to his party and its chief. Hence he wrote, in the Vita Nuova: "Those who are in the service of the Most High are called by three names: *palmers*, because they go beyond seas to the country of palms; *pilgrims*, because they go to the house of Galicia; *Romei*, because they go to Rome: and those whom I call *pilgrims, go there also*, to see that blessed image which Christ left to us as a copy of his own figure, which is seen by the glorious *lady of my mind*."

By many historians, the Albigenses were called Toulousans, from the name of the city where they had established their principal seat; and whose streets were so often dyed with their blood, to satisfy the vengeance of the Pope. We mention this, that there may be no difficulty in understanding Dante, when he declares that, from them, he learnt the sacred jargon which ensured the safety of his poem; and when we show that, from their ranks, he chose the companion who, jointly with Virgil, guided him in safety to the allegorical Beatrice. He thus describes, in conventional phraseology, the change which took place in his own style of writing.

At the end of the 20th canto of the Purgatory, he feels the holy mountain tremble, like a thing that is about to fall; and he turns icy cold, like *one who is going to death*. Delos was not more agitated, when Latona brought forth the *sun* and the *moon*. Here we may remind the reader, that on those two words, was founded a great part of the sacred jargon: they were synonimous with *truth* and *error*. And hence, when we read of the *moon* covering he *sun*, we must understand that the writer alludes to the deceitful practice of veiling the light of *truth* under a semblance of *error*, or *Papistry*. But to return: On every side bursts forth a loud cry: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace;* and Virgil and Dante both stand in motionless wonder, like the shepherds who first heard that same cry at the birth of our Saviour.

> "When, lo! even as Luke relates, that Christ
> Appear'd unto the two upon their way,
> New risen from his vaulted grave; to us
> A shade appeared."—(Purg. 21.)

This shade salutes the pilgrims, saying: Brethren, may God give you peace! Virgil returns the salutation, and asks him concerning his former state; to which the ghost, thus compared with Christ, answers: "Know that

> From Tolosa, Rome
> To herself drew me.
> Things oft appear,
> That minister false matter to our doubts
> When their *true* causes are removed from sight.
> Know, then, I was too wide of *avarice* (papistry);
> And, e'en for that excess, thousands of moons
> Have wax'd and wan'd upon my sufferings.—
> Therefore, if I have been with those who wail
> Their avarice, to cleanse me; through reverse
> Of their transgression, such hath been my lot.
> When thou exclaimedst, 'Lo!
> A renovated world, justice return'd,
> Times of primeval innocence restor'd,
> And a new race descended from above!'
> Poet and Christian both to thee I owed.
> Soon o'er all the world,
> By messengers from heav'n, the true belief
> Teem'd now prolific; and that word of thine
> Accordant to the new instructors chim'd.
> Induc'd by which agreement, I was wont
> Resort to them; and soon their sanctity
> So won upon me, that, Domitian's rage
> Pursuing them, I mix'd my tears with theirs,
> And while on earth I stay'd still succour'd them;
> And their most righteous customs made me scorn
> All sects besides.

These, and many other things, are related in the conventional jargon by the Toulousan who was drawn to Rome by the Mantuan. And Dante, between these two companions, pursues his journey towards Beatrice ; but, as soon as the lady of his mind appears with an entirely Christian aspect, and with an apocalyptical court around her, Virgil, the *pagan*, vanishes, and leaves him alone with the *Christian* guide ; who, by Beatrice's orders, administers to him the double Toulousan baptism by immersion ; after which, his *new life* begins. Thus, by the mystic water, and the deceiving spirit regenerated, he is made worthy to enter into a certain heavenly kingdom ; the nature of which may well excite our laughter, or rather our indignation, when we think how the sacred books, and especially that of St. John, were wrested by this sect into strange and perverted meanings. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born, when he is old? Jesus answered : Except a man be born of *water* and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—(St. John, ch. iii.) The Albigenses died *flesh*, and were born again *Spirit ;* died *Adam*, and were born again *Christ ;* and this expressed the difference between the outward man, or papalist, and the inward man, or antipapalist.

These few remarks will enable the reader to understand the real nature of this Statius, the Christian from Toulouse, who is likened to Christ ; and who joins the heathen Virgil on his way to lead Dante to Beatrice, who is also likened to Christ, with Peter, James, and John. They will show why that pious Christian tells a long story about human nature, and the formation of the body and the soul, and their separation from each other, both still being visible ; things which appear equally out of place, and unsuited to the subject, until their nature is properly explained. We may observe too, that the real

Statius was a Neapolitan; but Dante took the liberty of creating him a citizen of Toulouse, to serve his own particular purpose.

St. Paul, in the 2d chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, calls the three apostles—who attended their divine Master in his most retired moments, and who witnessed his transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and his devotion in the Garden,—*pillars;* and, following that passage of the apostle, the Paulicians made them three pillars, emblematic of the three theological virtues. St. Peter was *Faith*, St. James *Hope*, and St. John *Charity*. In the rites of the sect which boasts its descent from the Albigenses, three pillars appear, with the names of those virtues on them. And we read in their rituals, that on the capital of each pillar is written, in large golden letters, one of these three words: Faith, Hope, Charity. The candidate is obliged to travel for 33 years, (thus they call the 33 turns he takes, in allusion to the age of our Lord,) to learn the beauties of the *new law*. The Master leads him round the three columns, repeating to him successively the name of each virtue; and, afterwards, he asks him what he has learnt in his pilgrimage: to which he answers, that he has learnt the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and that by them he intends to govern himself. The Master assures him that they are the principles and *pillars* of the new *mystery*.—(See Light on Masonry, p. 220. Utica. 1829.) In these same rites of the pilgrimage, undertaken by the candidate who is 33 years of age, which extends through 33 years; the tragedy of Good Friday, and the events of the following days, are rehearsed; and Christ dies and rises again under his eyes. This new mystery, or new law, is the essence of Dante's Vita Nuova.

In the Paradise, we find this sectarian rite described exactly. Before the last vision, St. Peter examines him on faith; St. James, on hope; and St. John, on charity: relating to the three pilgrimages,—of the palmers, or

Templars, to St. John of Jerusalem; of the pilgrims, or Albigenses, to St. James in Galicia; and of the Romei, or Ghibellines, to St. Peter's in Rome: and at the examination presides Beatrice, who, by a far-fetched comparison, is likened to Christ, when transfigured before the eyes of his three apostles.

Wishing to let us know that these things are all mystical, he wrote in the Convito: "There is one thing which should be very attentively observed by readers, for their own and their pupils' benefit: We read that, when Christ went up into the Mount to be transfigured, he took only three apostles with him out of the twelve; and by that we are to understand, that, in *very secret things*, we should have but few companions."—(P. 103.)

The three pilgrimages of the Palmers, the Pilgrims, and the Romei, were symbolically directed: the first to the east, where the light appears; the second to the west, where it vanishes; and the last to the north, which is opposite to the light's course; and there it was that Lucifer established his throne.* In the same situations, are placed the three pillars in the above-mentioned rite, and these pillars, be it remembered, correspond with the three apostles, called by St. Paul *Pillars*.

One of Dante's most charming odes treats of these three mystic associations, and offers an example of the manner in which he blended them together, to serve for an *outward* ornament to his *inward* love. It begins thus: —

"*Three ladies* have encompassed my *heart* round about. They stand *without*, while *love* reigns *within*, and rules over my *life*.†" He gives the name of *uprightness*, or *justice*, to the first of the three ladies, but he desires that none, except the friends of virtue, shall presume to inquire into the things which this *justice* keeps veiled; he bids all others rest satisfied with the *outward flower*, without touching the *inward fruit;* from this lady, who was to declare herself to none but the friends of virtue, and who describes herself as the *sister to the mother of that love* which absorbed the heart of the poet, were the two others descended. She tells Love that "where the sun on the Nile drives every shadow from the earth, I, Justice, the sister of thy mother, brought forth this lady at my side, and she, gazing at herself in a limpid fountain, produced the other."

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* "I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the *north*." Isaiah, c. 14. v. 13.

† *Without* and *within*, viz. the outward and the inward sense. *Ladies* without, and *Love* within.

This canzone will be easily understood, when we reflect that the Templars were originally of Egyptian derivation, and that the Albigenses were an emanation from them.

In a bull issued by Boniface VIII., we read: "The church has two swords, one spiritual, the other temporal; the first is wielded by the church herself, the second by kings and warriors in her service," &c. &c.

These swords are figurative of the double power of religion and politics, and were transformed by Dante into two darts of love.

This Love tells the three ladies: "These are the two weapons which I craved for the good of mankind. Men may lament now, and weep, for theirs is the loss; but, although now blunted from disuse, the time will soon come, when *one* of them will be made brighter than ever." This is an allusion to the political power of the empire — Dante's never-failing hope.

These ladies are figures of the miserable and depressed condition of the three sects, Templars, Albigenses, and Ghibellines, which had, in earlier times, been so flourishing and so respected. "Each one seems cast down by grief and anguish, and desolate, like those who have no friend. The time is long gone by when they were joyous and glad." The poet calls himself, the exiled Ghibelline, the son of Flora, who fell with the White party, *Bianco fiore, the white flower*, and glories in the thought that he had fallen with *the good;* only regretting that the bright sign of his eyes was taken away far from his face, and that *Death* had set his key on his breast; expressions conveying meanings too important to escape the intelligent reader's observation. But although banished from the now papal Florence, *White Flower* preserved all his former nature; or, to make use of conventional terms, Florence *died*, but the White Flower still *lived on:* the death of the first took place because she withdrew her affections from the knights of Jerusalem; the last preserved his life, by pretending to honour the priests of Babylon, whom in reality he detested. All this is copied in an old *fabliau*, written shortly after Dante lived, of which the following is a very brief notice. The fabliau is called: "Le Jugement d'Amour, ou Florence et Blancheflor." "He who found the tale which you are now about to hear was full of *courtesy;* but he forbad it to be repeated before cowards, indiscreet speakers, or traitors. It is a profanation to reveal the mysteries of love to such a herd: they were only intended for knights and clerks." After this preliminary hint, the story commences; the writer availing himself of the licence granted to the sect, of changing the sex of his characters.

Florence and White Flower were two ladies who loved each other with a sisterly affection. One morning in May, the season of love*, as they stood by the side of a brook, they remarked the changes which *love was working in their faces.* Prompted by a feeling of mutual confidence, one confessed her love for a knight, while the other declared herself in favour of a priest; and a dispute arose between them which it was better to love, a knight or a priest. They agreed to decide the question by an appeal to the court of Love; and for that purpose, they entered a garden, kept by a nightingale, one of that deity's messengers. They asked him the way to the palace; but the guardian songster first eyed them attentively, to see whether they bore *Love's signet,* without which none could pass; and although they had that signet, he refused to admit them, until they had given him a kiss (the oral communication of the pass-word.) As soon as they complied with this condition, they were suffered to enter, and the first thing they saw was the king, Love, lying on a bed of roses. He welcomed them to his palace, and having heard the reason of their coming, he convoked his court of barons, who were all birds, (singers.) The question in dispute was then formally argued, but the confusion was so great, and the opinions of the feathered judges so various, that they could come to no decision; and it was agreed to settle the affair in a different way. The disputants chose each a champion; Florence, the chattering *parrot*, and Whiteflower, the prudent guardian of the mystic garden, the *nightingale.* After a short combat, the prater was vanquished by his more wary enemy; and Florence, seeing the fate of her champion, cried with a loud voice, *Death*, *death*, and immediately expired, while Whiteflower lived long to enjoy the fruits of the nightingale's victory. She who loved the knight, and preferred the voice of the parrot *died*, while the prudent nightingale saved the life of the priest's *lady*. A tomb was then raised by the birds to the memory of the dead Florence, and on it was written; Here lies Florence, who loved the knight.* This is an absurd fiction, certainly, but still worthy of notice. Throughout the whole fable, the allusions to Dante are evident; and being written by a Frenchman, it shows that every member of the sect, no matter in what language he wrote, was perfectly aware of the hidden meaning of his poem.

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* It was in the month of May that Dante (according to Boccaccio) fell in love with Beatrice.

In those days, it was esteemed an honour to be admitted as a member into any of the principal secret societies*: the most potent princes were at their head, and their influence and example induced many to enrol themselves as disciples, for the purpose of enjoying the privileges of fraternity with rulers of kingdoms. But the intrigues of the Vatican soon severed the ties which bound together companions so ill assorted. Princes heard their subjects encouraged to throw off all allegiance to themselves; and fearing that the advice would be followed in earnest, they made a precipitate retreat, leaving their secret associates exposed to all the fury of their enemy.

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* Thus the Pythagoreans raised a tomb to their indiscreet sectarians.

We shall see, that so long as the issue of their struggle for supremacy was doubtful, the emperors were, on all occasions, solicitous to draw over the proselytes of the secret societies to their party, in order to avail themselves of their riches, talents, and courage. There appears, in fact, to have been a sort of tacit agreement between them, that whenever the arms of one, aided by the not less potent weapons of the other, should succeed in crushing the common enemy, a general reform was to be commenced, and the government of the church given up to the Ghibellines; already, therefore, the Pope and his hierarchy were doomed to destruction. These plans were in agitation so early as the time of Frederic Barbarossa, who, in his long contests with the popes, was often a victor, although finally overcome; and they were renewed by Frederic II., who, for many years, braved all the power of Rome. By three pontiffs this last monarch was excommunicated; the first assigned no plausible reason whatever for his anathema, being afraid, probably, of letting the secret and real cause escape him; the second and third spoke out more openly; and in the memorable council of Lyons, held by Innocent IV., in 1245, the following was one of the charges preferred against the Emperor : " For entering into treaties of friendship and alliance with those who, after slandering and reviling the apostolic see, have separated themselves from the one true church. The suspicion of heresy is founded on no doubtful nor slight evidence, but on grave and evident proofs."

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* The Templars counted 40,000 disciples in their society; and at the breaking out of the persecution against them, they were in possession of more than 9000 lordships, and were connected with all the most illustrious families in Europe.

Four years afterwards, the Cardinal Remerius, in a letter addressed to all the faithful wrote : " The heretical despisers of the faith are gathering strength; they are defended and encouraged by the impious Frederic, in whose dominions heresy is preached, apostates are increasing, and God's enemies find protection and support." According to historians, it was at this time that some miraculous appearance of words took place, which declared : Woe to the clergy ! if they fall, a new order of priests will arise. And many similar forebodings were uttered, all of the same kind. " Rome will rise up against the Roman, (Pontiff) and the city will be taken away from the old priest, by him who is to take his place. A new flock is lifting up its head, and those who belong to the old, will soon be condemned to scanty fare. Their ornaments will be turned into shame, and their joy into mourning."* An ancient inquisitor declared that, " in the city of the Eagle, in the kingdom of Naples" (built by the Emperor, and so called from his imperial eagle,) " the heads of the new church are appointed. This creation takes place with a certain degree of solemnity ; and in mockery of the Roman Pontiff, they change their name, when they are advanced to the ministry." (See the Sacred Calendar of Prophecy, v. 3. p. 40.) But all the efforts of Frederic II. were unavailing ; and his successors were more cautious in their secret practices ; they desired, but dared not execute ; they promised every thing, and did nothing ; and the sectarians, whose ambition was to extend the influence of their party, often found themselves reduced to extremities, and exposed to all the fury of the popes and their satellites, until at length came Dante to save them with his invaluable resources. Beatrice died, and he read in her countenance: "I am at peace—I shall see the beginning of *peace*," as it is written in the Vita Nuova. As soon as the Toulousan joins the Mantuan, to lead Dante to the end of his journey, comes the cry of "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth *peace*." These things all have a reference to his determination: "I say that as I desire to be at *peace* with all, I must call my enemy Madonna Piety who defends me; and I call her Madonna in scorn."

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* See all these things related by Matthew Paris.

Boccaccio treats of the same things in a conventional romance, where the principal agents are Jupiter, Plutus and the race of Prometheus, created by Jupiter and persecuted by Plutus. In the genealogy of the Gods, he points out the original of these figures. "Theodosius says that this Jupiter was a *celebrated man*, who conquered and deprived Lycaon, (whom he transformed into a *wolf*) the king of Arcadia, of his kingdom; because he had human flesh served before him at a banquet." "Plutus signifies riches; and for that reason the Latins called him Dis-Pater, or the father of riches. The ancients pretended that he was the God of hell."

Of Prometheus, he speaks at some length, but very obscurely, saying: "It will be a hazardous task, to lift the veil from this fiction; and so much caution is requisite; that I shall say as little as possible on the subject." He then describes him, and concludes by saying that he has "many other and *true* things to tell. It is still to be seen who this Prometheus really was, who was *double*, like the man whom he made." He says that this Prometheus found men living in a savage state, like wild beasts, and that he left them civilized beings; that those who were formed by nature became brutal and ignorant, but that being taken in hand by the second Prometheus, (that is, the learned man), they were moulded like *stone*, and formed and instructed; he declares that Minerva beheld his works with astonishment, and took him up to heaven, where she offered him all that was necessary for the perfecting of his labour; and by this we are to understand, that the prudent man, under the guidance of wisdom, steals the fire from the sun, the symbol of truth, and communicates it to the unlearned, who is said to be endowed with life, when he becomes a rational and intelligent being.

Boccaccio's Filocopo or Filocolo* is a romance which contains every degree, regulation and vicissitude of the secret society, and relates the reasons for the change which took place in the language, the merit of which invention he ascribes entirely to Dante. We shall confine ourselves to the principal aim of this long work, which is to shew the fount from which Dante drew the idea of his new imageries. It is a companion worthy of the Vita Nuova, and may be called another commentary on the divine comedy; at the conclusion, the author dismisses it, with an injunction to follow the *Florentine Dante*, with the reverence of a servant, in relating the adventures of *Biancofiore* and *Florio;* and the romance does follow, not only the *measured* verses (as he calls them) of the Florentine, but his measured prose also, with the fidelity of a servant. We should feel disgust at the audacious manner in which scripture is here confounded with mythology, and the most sacred mysteries with vain fables, did we not reflect that the Jupiter, Plutus, Prometheus, and all the rest with them associated, are not real but allegorical beings.

Boccaccio says, that he was ordered to write this romance by his lady, who was named after her who bore that Saviour, who came to redeem us from the consequences of our first mother's ungovernable curiosity.* Perhaps too she commanded him to make use of the fictions, and the phrases, and even of the words used by Dante in his Vita Nuova; and if so, she was obeyed to the letter. Let us hear the place, day and hour when the light of her eyes entered his.

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* In the title, he calls it Filocopo, but Filocolo in the work itself, and he observes that the word comes from two Greek words which signify a lover of labour, or a *workman*, which is a name given to one of the sectarian degrees.

"I, the composer of this work, found myself in a magnificent temple in Parthenope, named after that saint who was burnt on a gridiron; and there, I listened to the melodious voices of those who were chaunting the service of the day. In that day, whose first hour Saturn governs, Phœbus having already reached with his horses the tenth degree of the celestial ram, as soon as the fourth hour had passed, a vision of loveliness appeared before my eyes, and I saw that it was the beautiful lady of whom I have already spoken, who came to hear what I was listening to. No sooner did I perceive her, than my *heart* began to tremble and palpitate, and I cried: Ah! what is this? fearing that something terrible was going to happen. Soon however, gaining courage, I ventured to look into the eyes of my beloved, and there I beheld *Love* clothed so *piously*, that I longed to declare myself his subject. Brave sir, I cried to him, how can I ever sufficiently thank thee for *bringing my blessing* before my eyes; the *heart*, which was before *cold*, begins to melt under the influence of thy rays. And I who have hitherto endeavoured carefully to avoid thy power, now humbly beg thee to *enter me*. I had scarcely uttered the words, when the bright eyes of the lady turned with a dazzling light upon mine, and at the same moment, I saw a fiery golden arrow advancing, which darted so quickly into my heart, that all my tremors were renewed; and it kindled so bold a flame, that my whole soul was intent on the matchless beauty of the lady, whose virtuous works made men doubt, whether she were not a daughter of God, rather than of man."

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* Boccaccio's biographers say that this lady was the princess Mary, the daughter of king Robert; and they are right; but they forget to add that this was the *personal*, but not the *mental* object of Boccaccio's love; and that, by the rules of the sect, he was obliged to have the one to conceal the other. Bartolo will shortly tell us who this Mary and Eve really signified, whom Dante also mentioned together.

When the lady of his mind first appeared to Dante, "the spirit of life, which dwells in the secret chambers of the heart, began to tremble and palpitate exceedingly; and the animal spirit said to the spirits of the face, Already comes our blessing. We may say with Homer, She does not seem a child of man, but of God." Again, when he saw her in a dream: "I found that this vision had appeared to me in the *fourth* hour of the night." We shall not delay here, nor make any remark on the season and the month, the day, hour, place and manner in which these curious lovers became enamoured of Madonna *Light*, as they called her, but pass on to the strange metamorphoses worked by this jargon. We shall see Dante, who was buried in Ravenna, turned into the brother of the same Jupiter, whom by the laws of the sect, he was allowed to call his brother, and he will have a temple and altar, and will be confounded with St. James of Galicia.

"That most high and noble prince, Jupiter, who holds the *imperial crown* and *sceptre*, and is alone worthy to possess the celestial kingdoms, had, in his goodness, made many dear brethren and companions to share his kingdom; but discovering that Plutus, whom he had made greater than all the others, had formed the base design of usurping more power than he was entitled to, he sent him from him, and gave to him and his followers those dark kingdoms of Dis which are surrounded by the Stygian marshes. He then made new generations to fill the vacant seats, and with his own hands, formed Prometheus, to whom he gave a dear and noble companion. Plutus saw this, and, filled with mortification at the sight of a strange people dwelling in the place whence he had been banished, he pondered on some means of bringing about their exile also, and soon found an opportunity of putting his schemes into effect. Tempted by his advice, these first creatures miserably transgressed the precepts of their creator, in his holy garden, and were punished by being consigned with all their descendants, to the mansions of Plutus, who saw and exulted in his successful attempt to defeat the original decree of Jupiter. For a long course of time, the Omniscient suffered him to triumph, but at length, moved with compassion towards those who had so foolishly allowed themselves to be deceived, and who were still confined in those dark abodes, he sent his son on earth, from the heavenly kingdoms, saying, "Go, and with thy blood, free the prisoners in Dis; leave behind thee *weapons* that may serve future generations to defend themselves against the false and dark practices of Plutus, and at thy command, Vulcan shall forge new thunderbolts, which shall make our power be felt, when thrown, as formerly, by thy hand. At the bidding of his father, the only son descended from on high to endure for us, the bearers of the *new weapons*, the deadly stroke of Atropos (by an allegorical death); and, when the earth felt his presence, it gave out, in every part, joyful and manifest signs of *future victory* to its inhabitants. Being already of mature age, he began to fill the world with his *weapons*, and to explain to those who listened with perfect faith to his words, the great injury done them by the old tempter; and they, recovering their senses, armed themselves with the *new defensive weapons*, and fought various battles against the ignorant. East and west resounded with the victories of these new knights, against whom none could stand, particularly when it appeared that they were equally indifferent to punishment and to death, and had boldly entered the field against Plutus himself. After the son of God had emptied many of the prisons in Dis, and gone back to his father, he sent to the princes of his knights the promised gift of the Holy Ardour; and, desiring that his works might be known even to the remotest west, he chose one of the said princes, who seemed most able to combat the insidious wiles of the enemy, and dispatched him into those parts, where, for some time, he carried on a very successful warfare; but, after fighting many battles, finding that his foes were too many for him, he submitted to the last stroke of Atropos with humility and fortitude, and rendered his soul up to the heaven his misfortunes had won for him. His followers, in sorrow and mourning, buried his remains in a suitable spot, and raised over his body a magnificent temple, to which they gave his name; and there it stands, an eternal memorial of that prince, near the last western wave, and holy fires burn there unquenchable, and sweet incense is offered up to Jupiter."

Then begins another part of the story. Quintus Lelius Africanus, a noble Roman, was married according *to the laws of the Son of God*, to Julia Topazia, a descendant of the Julii, and, being very desirous of a heir to his ancient name and inheritance, he offered up his prayers to the God who dwelt *on the distant western shores;* promising that, in the event of those prayers being accepted, he would make a pilgrimage to his temple; "and the saint for whom Galicia is visited" (Dante) heard him, and granted his desire, whereupon he prepared for his journey.

The wretched king of Dis, seeing that this custom (of going to visit Galicia) was very inimical to his designs, and that those who went, were enabled not only to withstand all his temptations, but to render themselves worthy of the kingdom which he had lost by his ambition, thought on some means of intimidating those who seemed disposed to forsake his infernal mansions and to undertake the same pilgrimage; he therefore summoned his ministers to his presence, and said: "Companions, you are aware that Jupiter deprived us of the kingdom which he now possesses, and gave us, for a portion, this extreme part which stands over the centre of the universe; in spite of us, he created a new race (that of Prometheus), and put them into our place, but we soon cunningly allured them away again to these abodes. Jupiter, not satisfied with his former injustice towards us, sent his son to rob us of them ; and we, being unable to resist him, lost them. But this is not all : he warned mankind of our snares, and gave them *arms* before which ours bent and broke; therefore now let us think of some means of revenging ourselves on this race (of Prometheus). We are forbidden to ascend, for he is mightier than we; still we may endeavour to regain what we have lost, and increase the numbers in our kingdom. The son of Jupiter left a precept on earth among his people, which, being very adverse to our interests, must be, if possible, extinguished in their minds. He enjoined constant labour,* and the Romans (those sectarians whose object was Rome), being superior to the others, have undertaken to teach and circulate this doctrine. My object therefore is, to withhold them from visiting these strange temples, by alarming their fears. And I have hopes of succeeding with a great number of those who are now on their way to the temple situated on the western shores; they shall speedily feel my wrath, only be you watchful to do the same wherever you may meet them."

We shall better understand why this figurative Plutus was so eager to vent his wrath on those who went from Rome to Galicia, when we show why the Pope persecuted the Albigenses so cruelly.

Through the insidious contrivance of Plutus, the valiant Quintus Lelius Africanus perished with all his family before he arrived in Galicia. His wife alone survived, and she was kept in the house of the king of Marmorina, where she gave birth to a daughter, the very same day on which a son was born to the king; and why?—because they must both be *nine years old* when they become lovers, that is, when the light of Madonna enters through the eyes of her admirer, and passes to his trembling heart.

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* That of making proselytes, extending themselves, writing in the conventional language, &c. &c.

From that time, the boy *Florio*, and the girl *Whiteflower*, were as inseparable as soul and body; and as they grew up, two wise men of the kingdom were appointed to instruct them. Then follows a long account of the Loves of Florio, the son of the king of Marmorina, and Whiteflower the descendant of the Cæsars, both born on the same day, the one in prosperity and the other in slavery. The fantastic tale of their allegorical loves shows the *seven* progressive degrees of the sect; the work is divided into *seven* books, and the lover is accompanied, as we see further on, by *seven* mystic companions.

Dante, in the Vita Nuova, relates a vision in which Love appeared and said to him, "I am thy Lord;" and, at the same time, holding the lady of his salvation in his arms, and a burning thing in his hand, he cried, "Behold thy heart." He says too, that Love made the lady eat that heart, which she did *doubtfully*. When we interpret the Vita Nuova, this dream shall be minutely explained; for the present, we only remind our readers that *heart* signified the great secret of the society. The king of Marmorina has a dream exactly like this vision of Dante's, which is sent to him by Venus, and is prophetic of his future fate, which is not unlike that of the wolf, who was killed by the ass and the sheep.

He thought he was on a high mountain, and that there he found a beautiful *white* hind, of whom he became very fond; he presently took it up in his arms, and then saw, coming out of his own body, a young lion (Florio, his son); and he fed the two animals together.

After a little while, he saw a spirit, radiant with *light*, (Love), descending from heaven, who opened the young lion's breast, and drew forth a *burning thing* which the hind eagerly devoured. Then he thought that the spirit did the same to the hind, and afterwards vanished. Next came a *wolf* over the mountain, who rushed forward to destroy the hind; and the king (who is a figure of the wolf) offered her to him; but the young lion coming to her rescue, so lacerated the wolf with his claws, that he deprived him of life. Both lion and hind were then sent by a large greyhound to the top of a high mount. But it seemed to the dreamer, that before they went, both plunged into a clear fountain, which transformed the lion into a noble youth, and the hind into a beautiful lady. If we desire to find a real owner for this hind, we must apply to Boccaccio's friend, and in his 157th Sonnet, we shall read her own words: "Let no one touch me; my Cæsar made me free." (See Petrarch's Sonnets.) And Florio told Whiteflower: "The mighty emperor of Rome would delight in thy company; and, were Juno's death possible, Jupiter himself would find none more worthy of her place than thou." Before we can understand the secret drift of this romance, we must be aware that Juno is the papal church; she is a very prominent character in the tale, being the instigator of the king of Hell and the king of Marmorina, *two in one*, in his persecutions of the sect.

While Whiteflower (who is a figure of the persecuted sect, abandoned by the emperor) was reduced to great misery, by the avaricious conduct of the king of Marmorina (the Pope), and of his wife (the church), her lover Florio had the following vision: — He thought he saw standing on a plain, *a great lord* (Love), with a *crown* of gold on his head, set in precious gems, which shone wonderfully; his robes were *royal;* in his left hand he held a strong bow, and in his right two arrows, one of gold and one of lead. He thought that this lord was of *middle age*, and that he was seated on two large *eagles*, with a *lion* under each foot.* The more Florio gazed on him, the more majestic did he appear, with his golden wings flapping in the air.† After some time, he thought he saw a beautiful lady on the right hand of the vision, who knelt down before him and uttered some prayer which Florio could not hear; but he looked very earnestly, and thought he recognized in this lady his own Whiteflower. Presently on the left hand of the *Lord*, he saw a stormy sea (*the waters are people*), and on it a beautiful vessel (ship without a pilot in loud storm, Purg. 6.), with its masts broken, its sails rent, its rudder gone and none to guide it; and Florio thought that he was in this ship, blindfolded, and quite at a loss what to do. Then he beheld a black spirit, fearful to behold, rising from the sea, (I saw a beast rise up out of the sea. Rev. xiii. 1.), and it laid hold on the ship and dragged it with such violence towards the bottom, that the half of it was already under water, when Florio, in great alarm at the near approach of *death*, cried with a loud voice, *Help!* but the *Lord* seemed as though he heard him not; and Florio's heart sank, as every hour increased the danger of the vessel. At length, the *Lord* spoke to him, saying, Fear not: I am he to whom thou hast so often *sighed;* I will not let thee perish. But still he did not move. Suddenly, while Florio was *weeping*, the bandage seemed to fall from his eyes, and he saw clearly that the ship was almost drawn under the water; and, *weeping* still more bitterly, he looked up to heaven, and implored the mercy of Jupiter, fearing that the *Lord* might fail him, (Jupiter and the *Lord* were the same person). Then he saw a beautiful lady with no other covering than a thin veil (Reason, veiled in fictions), who cried to him: O, light of my eyes, comfort thee. He answered, How can I be comforted, while thus half-buried under the waves? And she said: Free the vessel from that evil spirit, who is striving for her destruction. Florio replied: How can I do that, without arms? Then he thought that she drew from under her white veil a burning sword, and gave it to him, with a branch of green olive; after which she vanished.* He ventured on the waves, and, with the sword, wounded the wicked spirit severely, who, after receiving many blows, let go his hold of the ship, and went back to the place whence he came (Hell). And Florio rejoiced greatly when he saw that the sea gradually became calmer, and that the ship righted herself. He here awoke from his dream, and was astonished to find in his hand a branch of green olive. (The symbol of peace, shewn outwardly.)

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* The eagle and the lion form the griffon. Boccaccio describes them as distinct under *Love,* and Dante unites them into one under Beatrice.

† See Dante's description of the wings of the griffon.

At this point of the story, the sectarian changes his name, and assumes the *characteristic* or *war-name* of Filocopo,† and then sets out on his pilgrimage, crossing the sea in company with *seven* men, whom we shall see transformed into *seven* ladies, to find the Whiteflower from whom the machinations of Plutus had separated him. It is worthy of remark, that in the first place, he goes to Ravenna, the burial place of Dante, and then commences his search from that city. The following vision rapidly sketches the affairs of the sect, and the assumption of the sacred jargon: —

He thought he saw the sea as beautiful and calm as ever; and soon came in sight a vessel in which were

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* The sword and the olive, the symbols of war and peace — the first was real, the last feigned.

† Barruel, in his well-known work, speaks of this custom, and tells us that the Illuminati always changed their names. He adds — "There exists a similar precaution in the last degrees of the Freemasons, where the Rose-Croix receive what is called in the lodges their *characteristic*, that is, their *war name*.

seven ladies of great beauty. The *four*, near the prow, he recollected to have seen before; but the *three*, who sat near the stern, were quite unknown to him. A mast was between them, which seemed to reach to the skies, and which no motion of the vessel affected. He went on board the ship, and was welcomed by the *four* ladies; but, as he turned his eyes towards the prow, he there beheld a woman of dreadful aspect,* with a veil over her eyes, and her strength was so great that when she fastened her hands on the vessel, it seemed as though it must inevitably go down. The sea rose in stormy waves, and Filocopo was beginning to feel much alarm, when he heard a voice cry, *Fear not.* Reassured, in some measure, by these words, he began to look at the *four* ladies who were round him. The first held a mirror and a book (Prudence); the second had a sharp sword (her own) in her right hand, and a broken spear (her enemy's) in her left, on which she leant, but her aspect was very humble (Fortitude); the third sat on the terraqueous globe, with a sceptre in her hand (Justice); the fourth held her right hand on her *heart*, and one finger of the left on her lips (Temperance): the three last were under the guidance of the first or Prudence. When Filocopo had considered all these things, he looked again towards the prow, and there saw a young man of engaging appearance dressed very nobly,† and holding in his arms a beautiful lady, who had wept so bitterly that she had almost bathed him with her *tears*. Filocopo thought that she was very like his own Whiteflower, and, in a short time, he heard her call him by her *own name*. He heard the *four* ladies talking very fluently together, but he understood nothing,‡ all his thoughts being occupied with her he had lost. At last, no longer able to listen to them, he rushed towards the place where the youth stood with the lady, and he thought that she received him very joyfully. But soon the sea rose again in such a tempest, that not only the ship, but the whole universe seemed doomed to perish. The *woman* appeared again, and from her mouth issued a loud voice like thunder (an anathema); and a violent wind rushed by, which carried him, and Whiteflower, and the youth from off the ship, and dashed them into a place full of horrors (the inquisition), where they all three began to *weep piteously*.* By a *way before unthought of*, they escaped from this dark place without injury, and returned to the vessel, where the *woman* now gave them a cordial reception,† and suffered them to enter into the midst of the four ladies, to whose conversation Filocopo had not formerly listened (he did not understand them then). With them, he now saw a man of most dignified appearance, on whose head was a golden crown, and who spoke to him and explained the nature of the *three* ladies who were strangers to him. Presently the heavens appeared to open, and he saw a dazzling *light*, which seemed as though it would set the world on fire; but the part of the earth which felt the light (the sect) was more beautiful than the rest. It came over him, and he gazed into it, and saw a beautiful *lady*, clothed with the light itself, who carried a golden phial in her hand, full of a precious liquid, with which she bathed his face and person, and then vanished,‡ leaving his sight so improved, that all things, worldly and divine, were clearer to his perception than before. He looked, and found himself with the *three* ladies, with whom his Whiteflower appeared quite familiar. The first was all *vermilion* in her appearance; the second was greener than the *emerald;* and the third would have shamed the *snow.*[*] He remained near them, and followed their steps; and presently he found himself rising on the ship to heaven, the *three* being his guides, while the *four* stood on the waves to assist him in his ascent. He passed into the sacred regions of the gods, and saw all the virtuous dead in their power and glory; and, just as he was trying to exclaim, "Happy the man who is chosen for such glory!" he was awakened by two companions, who, seizing his arms, drew him from heavenly to worldly thoughts.

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* In the preceding vision this female appeared as a black spirit.

† *Love,* whom Dante saw in the same situation, in the first dream in his Vita Nuova.

‡ In the first degrees every thing is presented in symbols, very difficult to understand.

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* Remark the effect of their *weeping*.

† Before the church discovered the secret resource, she naturally courted those who apparently favoured her; and for a long time the sect was undisturbed. Persecutions and excommunications only recommenced at the beginning of the last century, and then they fell almost unheeded.

‡ This corresponds with the scene in the Purgatory, where Dante is bathed, first by Cato's order, and then by Beatrice's.

Filocopo then, with his *seven* companions, pursued his journey in search of Whiteflower. They embarked with a favourable wind, and every promise of a safe voyage. But where was Whiteflower all this while? Some Catalan merchants had taken her into the king of Babylon's dominions, and she was shut up in a mysterious Egyptian tower,[†] and carefully concealed from view. This tower is most evidently a figure of Dante's poem. It was most jealously watched by an admiral (Dante himself) who was a subject of the Babylonish ruler. It was so lofty that it seemed to touch the clouds, and the sun never shone on a more splendid edifice. It was walled up to the top, and yet *light* pierced through many windows; its exterior was plain, but within, it contained things so wonderful, that they must be seen, to be believed; there were one hundred magnificent chambers (cantos) besides many halls, of which one especially was the most splendid that could be imagined. It extended along the breadth of the tower, (the grand scene in the earthly paradise,) and was built on twenty-four pillars of porphyry, one of which was so transparent that it shewed every thing that was taking place in the hall. (The Apocalypse.) Inside the tower, there was one chamber of surpassing beauty; which the dwelling of Jupiter himself could not have equalled; it was of a proper size, and had this virtue that, those who entered it, no matter how *sad* they were, as soon as they looked up at the ceiling which was covered with every precious stone that can be numbered, they became *gay* and *cheerful*.* Before the door, stood the son of Venus on a pillar, with dazzling wings of gold; and in the centre of the apartment, was placed an ivory couch supported on four lions of gold, on which Whiteflower always reposed;† at the top of the tower, there was a delightful garden (the garden of Eden,) filled with every tree and flower that grows, and in the centre stood a clear and limpid fountain which sent its waters to bathe and fertilize them. (See the description of Dante's Eden.) Over the fountain hung a tree, which was always deemed matchless. Neither leaf nor flower ever forsook it, and it was generally supposed to have been planted by Diana (the three-faced Hecate) at Jupiter's command; wonderful things were said both of tree and fountain. Whenever the admiral wished to try the virtue of a lady

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[*] "Three nymphs
At the right wheel, came circling in smooth dance;
The one so ruddy, that her form had scarce
Been known within a furnace of clear flame;
The next did look as if the flesh and bones
Were emerald; snow new-fallen seem'd the third." (Purg. 29.)

[†] The writers on Masonry are unanimous in their opinion that the rites of the sect owe their origin to the ancient Egyptians. "The Egyptian mysteries were the cradle of this sect; the three degrees known by the name of Blue Masonry, testify to the truth of our opinion; trials, instruction and result, every thing shewing its derivation." (See Reghellini's work on Masonry.)

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* See our former remarks on the Grammar of the Gay Science.

† The car of Beatrice supported by four animals.

(allegorical females) he led her, at the first hour of the day, under this tree. If she were pure, a flower fell on her head, and the water flowed in softer streams; but if not pure, the flower fell not, and the water was troubled. By this means, the admiral discovered the real character of many whom he dismissed with ignominy from his presence.

This tower, then, full of hieroglyphics and emblems, was the place of Whiteflower's imprisonment, and from thence, Filocopo contrived to release her by his dexterity and good management, and to take her with him from Egypt to Rome: this is the aim of the whole work.

We have omitted taking any notice of that part of the romance which treats of the education, life, symbols, and mysteries of Love; because our chief design is here to show how the sect changed an amatory into a religious language. The author began by relating, that Jupiter bade his son to go to Dis, and release the prisoners there, leaving behind him *weapons* wherewith his followers might be enabled to defend themselves against Plutus' arts; we have read that this command was obeyed, and that these *new weapons* were found irresistible. The mystic visions of Florio, or Filocopo, have partly explained their nature; and now the lovers, united in *soul and body*, stand before us, ready to make use of them.

They drew near to Rome, and dressed themselves as *pilgrims;* but before entering the eternal city, Whiteflower had the following vision, which showed it to her in its glory; happy in a reformed religion, and a recovered emperor.

She thought that she was in an unknown place, and that she saw in the heavens before her a *lady*, whose exquisite beauty far surpassed her own; on her fair head she wore a crown of inestimable value, and her red garments (the imperial purple), shining in the clear light, illuminated the surrounding atmosphere. In her right hand, she bore a green palm (symbol of victory), and in her left a golden globe, and she was seated on two griffins (emblems of political and religious authority), who flying towards heaven, had already carried her so high, that her crown touched the stars; under her feet was another globe (the terraqueous) on which was described every region of the world. On either hand, sat a man of dignified and majestic appearance. The one on her right was old, and very gentle in his actions. Like the *lady* he wore a crown, significant of high dignity; his dress was *white*, and he was covered with a *red* mantle, and seemed to be seated on a *meek lamb;* his right hand carried *two keys*, one of *gold* and the other of *silver*; his left held a book, and his eyes were fixed on the sky. But he who sat on her left was young and proud, and powerful in his look, and wore a crown so brilliant, that it shone over the lady and the old man; his dress was like the lady's, *red*, and he was seated on a *lion*, with an *eagle* in his left hand, and a sword in his right, with which he made deep furrows in the globe under the lady's foot (the limits of kingdoms and states.) Whiteflower, struck with wonder, cried: O lady, thy face is too beautiful for a mortal; happy he who possesses thee! Much would I give to be able to sing thy praises before the *ignorant*. And the lady: Daughter, my life will last as long as the world: I am *Rome;* and if this aged man (on her right) had not pleaded with Jupiter, for pardon for the sins committed by thy father-in-law (the king of Marmorina, at Plutus' instigation), thy Florio must have taken the sword of this other (on her left.) But come to me, and speedily, for thy *Maker* desires thy happiness. So saying, she disappeared.

Here is evidence to confirm what we have said of the secret priesthood; because the king of Marmorina (urged on by Plutus to persecute Whiteflower) being a figure either of the Pope or of a king assisted by the Pope, he who entreated Jupiter to forgive him, could not possibly be a figure of the instigator himself. It is, on the contrary, a type of the new secret priesthood, which was to succeed the papal hierarchy; and when we find in the pages of history, that this priesthood was governed by a chief, who styled himself the true successor of Christ and Cephas, the high priest appointed to deliver mankind from Antichrist, then we shall feel convinced that the praises given in this romance to the successor of Cephas, the chief of the bearers of the *new weapons* which were to make war on Plutus, were praises given, not to the Pope, but to him who was destined to supplant him; and then we shall feel the meaning of these words; "O mighty and venerable city, whose yoke bends the most stubborn necks (of Plutus' followers), Rome, true *lady*, thou alone art worthy to be made the seat of the successors of Cephas; rejoice within thee, for thou wert of the first to take up the *holy weapons*." This is a worthy imitation of that great artist, who first made the sun go down, and then declared that Eneas's voyage to Latium, and the creation of the Latin empire had been pre-ordained by God, to bring about the establishment of the papal authority under the successors of Peter. And that was the passage cited by the Cardinal Bellarmine as proof unquestionable of Dante's devotion to the Pope and his church. But we must return to the lovers.

Dressed as pilgrims, they entered the holy city. Florio took a guide with him, and went out one fine morning, to see the beauties of Rome. On their way, they stopped to admire a splendid temple, dedicated to him who preached repentance in the wilderness, and announced that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; it was called *Lateran*. They entered the temple, and Filocopo saw a painting representing the figure of the Saviour, which excited his astonishment, as he knew not the meaning of the bleeding side, neither why the hands and feet should bear the marks of the cross. The aged *Hilarius*, (from *ilare*, *gay*) who was celebrated for his science, had just come to Rome with the son of the Emperor Justinian; he was one of the knights of God, and chancing to see Filocolo intently regarding the picture, he entered into conversation with him, and finally induced him to turn Christian. And here commences the abuse of the sacred doctrines.

Hilarius begins by relating the history of the creation, the rebellion of the spirits, their punishment, and the formation of the first pair; and then goes on to explain the principal points in sacred history so minutely, that the most wary reader might be deceived, were his suspicions not aroused by the seeming absurdity of dwelling on facts too trite and well known to require so much waste of argument. He then proceeds to repeat the history of our Saviour, from his incarnation to his resurrection; and he says that, at the birth of Christ, while the angels were singing: Glory to God, &c., the image of Romulus, the king of Rome, fell to pieces. Also, that there was a certain Octavius Augustus, who desired to be worshipped as a god by the Romans; but being a very prudent man, he first applied to the sybil, who came to him on the day of that glorious nativity. He inquired of her, whether any one would be born greater than himself, or whether he should let the Romans worship him; when the sybil showed him, in a golden circle round the sun, a virgin with a child in her arms, and at the same time he heard a voice cry: This is the altar of Heaven! Behold one, cried the sybil, greater than thou; worship him: and Augustus immediately offered incense to him.* After Hilarius has finished speaking, Filocopo repeats the Apostles' Creed, dwelling particularly on the part which tells of the descent into *hell*, and the resurrection from the *dead*, &c.; and concluding with these words: We believe that, at the end, he will come to judge the quick and the dead; the wicked will be cast into endless punishment with *Plutus;* while the just will reign in everlasting glory with Jupiter. Hilarius then says to the new believers: Come to the only *true light.* He is indeed wretched, who, having it in his power to deliver himself from misery, still obstinately continues in it. Come, wash in this holy fount, and adorn yourselves with the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity. And Florio and Whiteflower are made Christians.

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* The true meaning of this will be understood only by those who are aware that, in the sectarian ceremonies, the *outward* man beholds his *inward* self at a distance, expressed in emblematic figures.

The reason why the Church of St. John the Baptist was chosen as the scene of the baptism of the allegorical lovers, is clearly explained. The Baptist was, and is now, the protector of the secret order. And in the before-cited work of Reghellini, (La Maçonnerie,) we read: "In our pictures, sculptures, and engravings, Jesus is represented with St. John pouring water on his head. In our mysteries we keep up the remembrance of the baptismal ceremony; and, in the first degree, the novice is asked: Whence come you? and he answers: From St. John's lodge; meaning that he has been just purified by the waters of baptism. We shall give the ceremony of masonic baptism" which is given by a double immersion in two fonts. After the ceremony, Filocopo took his seven companions aside, and said to them: Dear companions and friends, new events give rise to a *new manner of language.* Doubtless, you will marvel at my words; but I am forced to utter them by a *new flame* (the Inquisition); and as prudence bids me speak, I will not conceal what *my heart* tells me is for our mutual benefit. Follow my advice, and you will be happy; and, to convince you that I am not guided by *avarice*, I give up all my power, honours, and riches, into your hands. Think not that I have abjured my errors, and adopted this faith *inconsiderately;* on the contrary, I have long thought on and examined the question; and I have found in it no precept which is contrary to the *holy faith.* Be, therefore, with me, always striving for *our salvation.*

It is here explained, that the son of Justinian, the emperor of Rome, had turned *Catholic*, and inscribed himself among the *Knights of God;* being appointed to guard the Temple of *St. John* during the reign of *John* the High Priest. This John, after baptizing Filocopo, showed him the image of Christ which was brought from Jerusalem to Vespasian; and also the seamless robe which he wore. This robe is a figure of the Empire, one and indivisible; and hence Dante, in the Monarchia: "It is not lawful for the Emperor to divide the empire; and if it be true, (as men say,) that Constantine did divide it, and give part to another, by that act he rent the seamless robe of Christ, which even they, who pierced with a spear the side of the true God, dared not do."—(B. 3.)

We have now seen the principal design with which this sectarian romance was written; and, did it not demand too long a review, we could show that every page contains a deep and secret meaning. From so much that is interesting, we would select the episode of the youth Fileno, who came from Spain into Italy; began his pilgrimage at Ravenna, where Dante died; then went to Mantua, where Virgil was born; and finally settled in Tuscany, where he was turned into a fountain of tears. And next in importance to this, is the story of the four unfortunate ladies, with Greek names, who are figures of those imprudent sectarians who revealed the mysteries of the first jargon, and thereby rendered the adoption of the second necessary. We must be satisfied, for the present, with having shown the nature of the weapons which Florio and Whiteflower girded on, to war against Plutus and Hell.

Boccaccio left several other works written in this jargon, which all refer to Dante as to a great model: two of them, which are also in the form of pilgrimages, are more clear and decisive than the one we have just examined, and place beyond a doubt the fact that Dante borrowed his style of figurative writing from the Templars and the Albigenses.

The veneration with which he was regarded by Boccaccio, is evidenced throughout all the latter's works.

In the Amorosa Visione, a poem of fifty cantos, all in acrostics, he meets the usual number of allegorical ladies, (seven,) accompanied by the most illustrious poets. He contents himself with mentioning the names of the most of them; but, when he comes to Dante, no words are forcible enough to express the admiration he feels. "I saw a great poet receiving homage from the choir who surrounded the seven ladies. The principal female put a crown of laurel on his head, while the others rejoiced; and seeing so much honour paid to one person, I drew near to see who it was, thinking he must be something extraordinary. And my guide said: That is Dante, the Florentine; the glory of the Muses."

He then proceeds to say, that as soon as he heard the name of the great *Master*, from whom he had learnt every thing *good*, he blessed God for letting him see that master honoured according to his deserts; and he found it scarcely possible to turn his eyes away from the place where stood the glory of the Florentines. He would, indeed, have gazed on him for ever, had not his guide hastened him away. He attempted to delay, saying: If you could but know who this man is, whom I delight to gaze on——the guide answered: *You* could not make me know him better; but there is something more to be seen. And when he turned from Dante, his eyes rested on her, the beloved of many lovers, seated on a *car of triumph*, with a crown of rich gold on her head. Her aspect was noble, and she held a glittering sword in her hand, with which she seemed to threaten the world. This lady was the *enemy of Death*, and her robes were *imperial*. Behind her, revolved a brilliant circle, on which were described kingdoms and empires; and on her forehead was written, in golden characters: I am the glory of the world.

Farther on, he saw *Love*, just as he appeared to Filocopo in his visions, seated on two eagles, with two lions under his feet, a crown of gold, wings of gold, and a lady on either side. The allegorical description of the seven virtues, in the 38th and 39th cantos, is well worthy of our attention; as we shall find that the *three* theological virtues correspond precisely with the *three* pilgrimages.

In the midst of a garden, whose beauties rivalled Eden, stood a beautiful fountain : at each corner of this fountain was placed a female statue : and, supported by these *four* figures, *three* others stood in a large basin. The first was *Faith:* she was *black*, and with a *laughing* countenance, she was pouring forth *tears* from her eyes. The second was *Hope:* she was *white*, and the water spouted out from the crown of her head. The third was *Charity :* she was *red*, and the limpid stream flowed from her bosom. The urn of each figure, into which fell the water, was distinguished by an animal's head. A *bull's* head, before the urn of *Charity;* a *lion's* head, before that of *Hope;* and, before the urn of *Faith*, a *wolf's* head! Out of the mouth of each beast flowed a stream, which took a certain direction to water the garden. The first (from the bull) flowed towards the *south;* the second (the lion's) towards the *east;* and the third (the wolf's) towards the *north*, where Isaiah placed the throne of Lucifer. The first two streams produced a gay abundance of fruits and flowers; the last carried with it ruin, drought, and desolation. What a cruel satire is here contained within a few lines!

In all Boccaccio's works, we see Dante's spirit tracked and pursued. In the "Commedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine," or "Ninfale d'Ameto," he explains the *seven* degrees by which the blind are gradually enlightened by *seven* ladies, who turn out to be the *seven* virtues. A short examination of this tale will show how completely it follows the plan traced out by Filocopo. He gives the following reason for the change in the language.

"While the shepherd Ameto was with the seven ladies who had brought him up, he saw a vision of seven poetical, and seven priestly birds, swans and storks. They all rose in a flight from the neighbouring shores, with a noise that filled the sky; and as they came nearer, the ladies saw that they were divided into seven and seven, and that they were fighting so fiercely that the air was filled with their feathers. After a long contest, the storks retreated; and while Ameto and the ladies were wondering what the victorious swans would do, *a new light* broke in the sky, and there descended a pillar of fire, like that which guided the Israelites in the wilderness, leaving behind it the way of Iris (peace), and a sweet voice spoke unto them, the voice of *Venus*, the Goddess of *Love*, saying: "I am the *light* of heaven, and those who follow me will never go astray." Dante's opinion of the name of this *light* was somewhat different. "We are instructed in this by the Emperor of the Universe, who is *Christ*,—he *died* for us, to bring us *life*, and *he is the light* who lightens our darkness, as St. John tells us." (Convito.)

Ameto strove in vain to encounter the gaze of that radiant countenance. The holy Venus bade the seven ladies tear the veil from his eyes, that he might be able to see her beauty, and speak of it to his companions. No sooner were the words spoken, than all the seven ran to him, and so intently was he gazing on Venus, that he did not feel conscious that *Lia* (active life) had taken hold of him, until he saw his *old dress* thrown away, and felt himself *bathed in a clear fountain;* after which, he was given, quite pure, to *Fiammetta*, (contemplative life.) *Mopsa* dispersed the mist which hid Venus from his sight.—*Emilia* directed him where to look for her. *Acrimonia* strengthened his vision — *Adonia* covered him with rich drapery — and *Agatopen* breathed into him, and kindled him with an unwonted fire.*

Ameto, thus enlightened, cried to Venus: O sacred goddess, *only light* of heaven and earth, look on me;

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* "The minister of the Albigenses, according to their historians, breathed seven times into the mouth of the believers."—Millot. Hist. des Troub. v. 1. art. Izarn.

and by thy holy and ineffable triple name, grant me thy aid; for the soul which thou hast newly given to me is burned with *seven flames*.

Lia having given him a *new life*, by immersing him in the fountain, the *seven* ladies gathered round him, singing the same song which the seven virtues sang to Dante after his mystic immersion. "Here we are nymphs, and in heaven stars." Then Ameto understood the real nature of these nymphs, and of the temples and the goddesses, and their lovers; for all was clear to his intellect, now that he was become a *new man*. He then returned thanks to the seven ladies, beginning with *Mopsa*, who had cleared away the mist which obscured his intellect, and ending with *Fiammetta*, who had given the last touches to perfect his nature, and render him worthy to rise among the blessed in the day of judgment.

We know not whether our readers be perfectly convinced of the real nature of this tale, if not, perhaps, they will listen to the words of Cybele, the goddess of the whole earth, and mother of Jupiter, who speaks to her followers by the mouth of Lia, or active life. She is talking of Florence: "Happy was she, and faithful to him who made all things, until the cruel Vandal, the spoiler of Italy, the ferocious enemy of the Roman empire came, and by his wily counsels, caused an effusion of blood, and the *second flames*." To repair the mischief done by that enemy, it was necessary to rebuild the city from its foundations; and then Lia goes on to say: "I have been devoted to Cybele from my earliest years, I have mounted every hill with bow and arrow, and the flames of Venus have scorched me. I have cured the mental blindness of Ameto with my *light*, and made him to love and follow the things which are good; turning all his former rudeness into gentleness. This change is owing to Venus as well as to you (she is speaking to the other six), and therefore will I honour her always. You, therefore, who are of *sound intellect*, and whose *hearts* are full of *love*, listen to my *language* and note the *truth* which is *hidden;* for *natural reason* will not suffice to explain it.

The book ends with the following jeer at the Romish church: " If there be any defect in this work, let it not be ascribed to malice but to ignorance. I entreat the examination and correction of the mother and teacher of all, the most holy church of Rome." Well did Boccaccio know that no work from a sectarian's pen was ever published without that mother's approval.

The object for which these tales were written appears sufficiently clear, and yet we shall see others much more clear, much more decisive, than either the Ninfale d'Ameto or the Amorosa Visione, or the Filocopo; in fact, Boccaccio boasted that he had penetrated into the enemy's camp, and plundered and ravaged every thing, without meeting with any resistance.

We will now give a brief summary of the inward spirit of the Decameron; we say a *brief* one, because a complete interpretation of that work, would demand a volume to itself; we therefore confine ourselves to a notice of those particular parts which relate to our disquisitions; and we begin by selecting the tale which describes a pilgrimage to the Island of Love, where the Templars and their grand master had fixed their chief residence; and whence the last grand master, with his knights was enticed by Philip the Fair, and condemned to be burned in Paris. We seek not to discover the motive of him who commanded Boccaccio to write this work; it is enough that we know that the order did come from one who could not be disobeyed, and of this the writer himself assures us in one of his Latin letters: " I wrote it when young, at the command of a superior."

The author first introduces us to the seven ladies, who had met together in the church of Santa Maria Novella, in Florence, in the holy week. We shall pass over the artful discourse with which one of them * endeavours to persuade the others to fly from the infected city, in order to *assist*, *preserve*, and *defend* their lives, and proceed with our interpretations, only stopping to point out to our reader's notice the singular correspondence between the works of our three great masters.

Dante's poem commences its march in the holy week; so does the Africa of Petrarch †; so does the Decameron of Boccaccio. Beatrice sent her aid to Dante on Holy Thursday; Laura first appeared to Petrarch on Good Friday; Fiammetta was seen by Boccaccio, for the first time on Holy Saturday. On Holy Thursday, Beatrice turned her *bright eyes* away full of *tears*, and sent Virgil to Dante; on Good Friday, Laura found the way open through *her eyes* to the heart of Petrarch; and on Easter-eve, Fiammetta had *love in her eyes*, clothed *piously*, and stole the heart of Boccaccio. On Thursday, Dante was in a dark forest, and delivered by Beatrice; on Friday, Petrarch was in a gloomy temple, when he saw and loved Laura; on Saturday, Boccaccio was in a similar edifice, when he beheld Fiammetta. And what is even more singular, these lovers expected *death*, as the certain consequence of their passion, nor had they long to wait, for it came in time to enable them to rise again on the third day. Out of Italy, too, the singers of love usually lost their hearts under similar circumstances; as for an example: Ausius March, who fell in love with his Teresa on Good Friday in a church. ‡ On Good Friday, the Templars celebrated their most solemn mysteries, in which Christ died and rose again. But it is time to return to Boccaccio.

In the Decameron, every thing depends on the *num-*

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* *Pampinea*, the name of the first of the seven ladies of the Decameron, and of the second pastoral, whose meaning the author refused to declare, when pressed by one of his friends.

† See his Letter to Posterity.

‡ See Sismondi's Litt. du Midi de l'Eur. vol. 1. p. 141.

bers, and the *names* employed. If Boccaccio had been forced to make eight ladies instead of seven, and eleven days instead of ten, his work would no longer have conveyed any meaning. He divides the seven, into the four women, and the three men-servants; and these latter and the three masters are figures of the same thing under two aspects: they are outwardly *slaves*, inwardly *free*. The same thing may be said of the *names*, which in every tale bear an inward sense; and in his Introduction, he confesses to have given them *feigned* names, but not without good *cause*.

Neifile was the queen of the third day; her name signifies *a lover of novelty*: and she gave the following subject to be argued: "On one who gained something he had ardently desired; or by address recovered what he had lost."

She was elected Queen of the Gay Company on Thursday, and she commanded that the two following days should be devoted to a strict repose. The Sunday opened brightly: the crimson tints of the dawn had begun to fade before the sun's rays, when the queen arose, and commanded the company to assemble in a place they had not yet seen. She led them by a narrow path to a magnificent palace, which was seated on a hill; and the gate being thrown open, they all entered a *garden*, and began to examine the beauties which, at first sight, had almost dazzled them. The air was perfumed with balmy spices from the *East*; every plant that could enchant the eye, sprang up in wild profusion; the orange and citron tree waved over them, bending under their *old* and *new* fruits; and in the midst of a meadow, whose verdure rivalled the green of the emerald, stood a *fountain* of the whitest marble. In the centre of the fountain, was a pillar, supporting a figure, from which rose a stream of the most limpid water, which seemed to enter the clouds; and then falling again, with a soft murmur, into the fountain, it flowed through the garden; first disappearing entirely, and then rushing in all its brightness down the plain, where it turned *two mills.* Neifile's subjects were lost in enchantment at the beauties of this exquisite place; and with one voice they declared, that, if ever there was a *Paradise on earth*, it must have been the very counterpart of this garden.

This was the place to which the *Lover of Novelty* removed her court; and here, seated round the fountain, she commanded the company to listen to the following tale. Here let us remember, that Dante came from the *Elisei*, who were descended from an ancient Roman noble, called *Eliseo*, his family name being derived from one of the *Aldighieri* of Ferrara: in the course of time, the word (as we read in Boccaccio's Life of Dante,) was contracted into *Alighieri*. Therefore the seventh tale of the third day, which relates the adventures of *Tedaldo* degli Elisei, contains the internal *name* as well as *life* of DanTe D'Aldo ghieri, of the family of the Elisei; and of that tale we now present a brief summary.

Tedaldo degli Elisei was a noble and honourable Florentine, the accepted but *secret* lover of *Ermellina*.* We say *secret;* but we should add, that, whenever he could open his heart *safely*, and without fear of exciting suspicion, he never failed to express his devotion and attachment to her in whose keeping he had placed his fortune, honour, liberty, and love. But the enemy of happy lovers, *Fortune*, proved the bane of their life. Ermellina revealed the secret of her heart to her confessor; and being required by him to give up her lover, she, after a long struggle, consented. The unhappy Tedaldo quitted Florence in a state of mind approaching despair; and engaging himself in the service of a merchant, who was going to Cyprus, he embarked with him; and, under the name of Filippo Sanlodeccio, conducted himself with so much prudence, that he soon became a very celebrated trader. Equally renowned was he for his

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* *Ermellina* (Ermine), so called from her fairness, and relating to *Whiteflower*.

verses; and it happened one day, while he was in that remote island, that he heard some one singing a canzone of his own composition, which he had written to describe his love for Ermellina. The sound of those simple words rekindled all his desire to behold her; and, disguising himself as a *pilgrim from the Sepulchre,** he returned to Florence again, and, attended by a servant, repaired to a small inn, kept by two brothers,† near the dwelling of his beloved, which he found silent and closed, as though its mistress had been *dead.* Much moved at this, he was returning to his inn, when he met *four* of his brothers near the door, dressed in *black,* (the cardinal virtues in a papal garb). Knowing that he was too much changed, both in person and dress, to be easily recognized, he spoke to them, and found by their answers that they were mourning for him as *dead.* He discovered, afterwards, that the mistake arose from the fact of one, who was *his perfect image,* having been put to *death* by *three* men; and he came to the knowledge of this in the following way. While he was sitting alone, at midnight, he thought he saw the ceiling open, and three men descend with a beautiful maiden, who held a light (Reason), and from their secret discourse, he found out that *these* were the men who had put his image *to death.* The next day, he made further inquiries, and found that Ermellina was still *alive;* and, immediately dismissing his servant, he proceeded towards her house, and, entering, found her sitting in a room on the ground-floor, *weeping* bitterly. Tedaldo approached her, saying: Madonna, your peace is near. The lady looked up, and, still *weeping,* cried: Good man, you are apparently a foreign pilgrim; what know you of peace, or of my sorrow? The disguised lover answered: I am come, sent by God, to turn your *tears* into *smiles*. (Now the reason of her grief was this: Her husband, Aldobrandino Palermini,* was supposed to be the author of that man's death who was taken for Tedaldo, Ermellina herself being deceived.) He who died was never loved by you. Arise, and *weep* no more; listen to what I am now about to tell you; but beware of repeating my words. He then promised to liberate her husband from his dungeon; but, at the same time, he failed not to reproach her for having listened to the advice of the infamous confessor, and caused the exile of her innocent lover. The lady excused herself by saying, that the friar had terrified her by his assurance that, if she refused to give him up, she would surely fall into the kingdom of hell, and be doomed there to endless punishment. On hearing this, the pilgrim broke forth into the bitterest invectives against the friars, and against their pride, avarice, and robbery; urging her, if ever Tedaldo returned from his banishment, to restore him to all the love he was in the enjoyment of, before she gave ear to the insinuations of the vile priest. When concluded, the lady exclaimed: O friend of God, truly hast thou spoken; I confess my error, and would willingly now repair it; but Tedaldo is *dead*. Tedaldo is not *dead*, answered the pilgrim, but *alive* and well; and now the time is come, and I will reveal to you the secret which you must guard for your life's sake. Then did he cast aside his pilgrim's garb, and assume his own Florentine language, crying: Dost thou not know me? When Ermellina saw him, she started back, as from a spirit come from the *dead;* but Tedaldo reassured her, saying: Doubt not, I am thy own *living* Tedaldo, and I have never been *dead*, notwithstanding what men say of me. After this, he resumed his disguise, and, taking a tender leave of the lady, departed. He then made known to the authorities, the fact of his return; and having brought about the release of Ermellina's husband from prison, he brought the *three* murderers to punishment, and reconciled his *four* brothers with Aldobrandino. These things being happily settled, all, with one accord, (but more especially the lady,) loaded the pilgrim with praises and honour; and he, as some compensation for their kindness towards him, prepared a sumptuous banquet (relative to the *Convito* of Dante, which explains the secrets of the poem,) in the mansion of Aldobrandino, to which he invited his *four* brothers and their wives. At first, there reigned a certain silence in the apartment, when, at length, the pilgrim, who still wore his disguise, thinking it was now time to declare himself, rose up from the table, and said: Nothing seems wanting to render this banquet complete, except Tedaldo; and, strange to say, he has been *constantly with you,* and yet you have not *known* him. Behold him now! and, throwing off his pilgrim's dress, he stood before them clothed in a jerkin of *green* silk.* It was a long while before they could be convinced that it was really himself; but after they had all examined and questioned him, doubt was at an end, and they fondly and joyfully embraced him. With his own hands, Tedaldo then stripped the *black* garments from the shoulders of his brethren, and caused others to be brought; and the *banquet,* which had begun in an unpromising silence, ended in gaiety and enjoyment. Still, for many days, the Florentines gazed doubtfully upon Tedaldo, as they would upon a man risen from the *dead;* and even his own brothers scarcely believed in his identity.

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* This expression may be taken in a double sense; either that he was disguised as one coming from the Holy Sepulchre, or as a *dead* man.

† Tedaldo, and his servant, signify Dante *two in one:* outwardly a servant, inwardly free; and hence we shall hear him described as having the cloak on peculiar to *slaves,* and an inward garment of *green.*

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* We find the emperors frequently called by the name of Aldobrandino by these ancient novelists. Palermini relates to *Palermo*, the first bards of Love being Sicilians.

This is precisely our own case: so great is the illusion conjured up by Dante d'Aldoghieri, in the disguise of a pilgrim *from the holy sepulchre*, that those who have the opportunity of touching him with their hands, can hardly persuade themselves of his reality. The tale concludes by saying that the man who was really *dead*, and who had been the cause of all the confusion, turned out to be one Boniface of Pontremoli (Pope Boniface), a robber who was in league with other robbers of *Lunigiana*. All these things being cleared up satisfactorily, the suspicion which had hung over Tedaldo vanished.

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* *Green,* the symbol of vegetation and *life,* was the characteristic colour of the Albigenses; with which they mixed *violet,* the symbol of humility. Laura was dressed in a robe of green and violet when first Petrarch saw her.

In another work of the same nature,* we read that *Papi Tedaldi*, a Florentine, once circulated a report that a certain young Roman (the Roman sect), who was much loved and respected, had *died*. This news caused a very great and painful feeling, and many would have laid down their own lives, could they have restored the youth. When Papi Tedaldi saw the effect he had created, he hinted that the young Roman was not *really dead* after all; and that it was in his power to release him from the prison in which he was confined, provided he were assisted by the youth's friends; but he spoke in vain, for none would advance a penny or move a finger for him; and so the Roman remained shut up in the Florentine's house.

This version of *Tedaldi*'s history is more conformable with the truth than Boccaccio's, which makes Dante enter Florence *really*, as he did enter it *in thought*.

Of this curious little tale, as related by Boccaccio, we find not the remotest hint in the pages of Florentine history; and were we not in the secret of its *real meaning*, we should ask how it is, that an event in which so many citizens were involved, and which caused first grief, and then gladness through their streets; an event which offered the singular instance of one man bearing so strong a resemblance to another as to be supposed *dead*, because his likeness had died before him; and this event, be it remembered, not happening to an obscure person, but to an individual of distinguished family, and of talents which were conspicuous enough to cause his verses to be repeated in far distant countries; we repeat, that did we not comprehend the story, we should ask how such an event could have escaped the notice of the chroniclers of the time, who registered the minutest fact, or why we find it not in the archives of the republic, or in the acts of the tribunal which must have condemned the slayers of the robber to death? And where are the verses of that Tedaldo, whose fame spread even to Cyprus? Manni, who was indefatigable in his search into the origin of the tales of the Decameron, could find no traces relative to this one. Are we then to pronounce it a fable? By no means: its foundations are laid in the history of real life; it is the sectarian biograpby of Dante the Florentine poet.

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* See the last of Doni's Tales. This author, who was profoundly versed in the works of Dante and Boccaccio, was persecuted by the court of Rome for writings which now seem sufficiently harmless. His biographer, however, says that no man ever knew better how to veil deep mysteries.

The day of Neifile's reign was closed by a ballad, sang by Lauretta, which her listeners interpreted in divers ways. Some considered it an amusing trifle, while others, of juster discernment, understood the serious meaning it conveyed.

This tale is a fair specimen of the contents of the Decameron. It would be a work of great labour to investigate all the secret mysteries of a book, where every sentence is written in a cant language; we shall therefore conclude by citing the author's farewell address to the ladies, at the end of the volume: "Noble ladies, for your consolation I undertook this laborious work; and, if the divine grace has deigned to support me through it, to your pious prayers, and not to any merit of my own, I ascribe my success. I thank God that he has enabled me to complete all that I desired to say in this book; and, thanking you also, I shall now rest awhile from the labour of the hand and pen. If any too free expressions have escaped me in the course of these tales, they have originated in the nature of my subject; and this will be admitted by every reader, who, with the calm eye of reason, studies them with the desire of acquiring useful knowledge from their perusal. They will find it, provided they apply them to the times and persons for whom they were written." Those who do not comprehend the value of his *numbers* and *names*, will read Boccaccio, it is true, but they will not understand him. The first are all *mystical*, and the *last* are of Greek derivation; and hence, when speaking of himself, he says (by the mouth of the lady of his mind), "From constant association we soon acquired the power of conversing together *in public*. And when he found that I was very quick in learning and in understanding him, he proceeded to give me more *subtle* instructions, teaching me that love might be testified, not by words only, but also by the movements of the countenance and the hand. This I soon comprehended, and consequently, whatever the one desired to signify, the other understood without need of explanation; and seeing this, he then went on to teach me the language of *figures*, calling me *Fiammetta* and himself *Panfilo;* and many a time have I heard him relate, before a number of persons, the history of *two Greeks*, Panfilo and Fiammetta, and how they first became in love with each other, with all their subsequent adventures, giving *suitable names* to the *places* and *persons* of whom he was speaking. The *simplicity* of his listeners amused me almost as much as his sagacity.* Sometimes I trembled lest his warmth of language might carry him too far; but he was more prudent than I supposed him to be, and defended himself by the *false Latin.*[*] O, *pious* ladies! what does not love teach its votaries? I, a simple maiden, who was too diffident ever to speak before my humble companions, was so enchanted with this *way of speaking*, that very shortly I could have surpassed most poets *in fiction*; and there are very few things to which I could not reply by a *fictitious tale;* were they never so difficult to learn or to apply." "Although I have written of nothing which is not quite true, yet I have so arranged my subjects that, except *him* who knows them as well as I, none will find out who *I am*." Boccaccio himself, who *did know her*, has told us who she was. Not the princess Mary, the daughter of King Robert, as has been generally supposed, but the *light* of Madonna *Lucia*, or *Light's eyes* personified. The mystery is cleared up in his Amorosa Visione, where he saw *Love* seated on two *eagles*, with two *lions* under his feet (the *eagle* and the *lion* form the *griffon*), with a crown and wings of gold, and a *lady* on each side; one was crowned with roses, and looked like *Love himself* (*Love* is both male and female); and the other was *Lucia*, whose beautiful eyes shone with such a lustre, that each one looked like Fiammetta, dazzling with love. Fiammetta, then, is the *Light* of the eyes of *Lucia*.[†] "By my lady, I always mean the subject of the preceding canzone, that is, *Light*, the beautiful and virtuous daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, whom Pythagoras called *Philosophy*." (Dante.) Dante, Petrarch,

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* In various authors, we find expressed the amusement with which they heard their artful tales taken literally.

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[*] This word *Latin* signifies the jargon spoken by the partisans of the *Latin* empire. Hence, Love speaks in *Latin* to Dante in the visions of the Vita Nuova. We find the new style of language called *New Latin*.

[†] Tiraboschi, in his Life of Boccaccio, dissents from the opinion of those who consider this Fiammetta as a real historical personage; and, taking into consideration the many contradictions into which Boccaccio has fallen with respect to her, he concludes by saying that these very contradictions appear to him a convincing proof that he spoke of a poetical object, and not of a living one.

Boccaccio, Cino and many others, repeatedly called their enigmatical ladies *Light;* and from this *Light* formed a *female* image, which entered their heart from their *eyes:* "When the *image lady* enters the depths of the heart by the eyes, all else is chased away." (Petrarch, Son. 73.)

In an engraving for the frontispiece of the History of Jean Léger, which we have often quoted in this volume, we see this *light* surrounded by *seven stars*, and Léger himself tells us that the Valdenses and Albigenses wore this emblem in a seal.

This *Light*, or *Lucia*, is one of the principal movers of the machinery of Dante's poem. In the second canto of the Inferno, he relates that Lucia, the enemy of the cruel, went to Beatrice to entreat her to lend her aid to release the pilgrim from the persecutions of the wolf; and that Beatrice, who was seated by Rachel, did send Virgil to deliver him from the beast, "by his eloquent persuasive tongue." The commentators all agree that the Lucia who seeks out Beatrice, and the Rachel whom she finds in her company, are imaginary beings; and yet, in the same breath, they declare that Beatrice herself was a Florentine lady! O, holy Lucia! why extinguish thy light at the needful moment? Why not let them read, with an understanding heart, the words written by him who was the lover of Madonna *Light*, the lady of his mind? "The glorious lady of my mind, whom many called *Beatrice*, not knowing how to call themselves. Not without reason do I say that this Love acts on my mind — I say it advisedly that the nature of the Love may be known by the *place on which it acts*. By my lady, I mean *Light*, the daughter of the Emperor of the Universe." It is curious to read how this *light* or *Lucia* becomes an eagle, the arms of the Emperor of the Universe.

In the Purgatory, canto 9, Dante dreams that he is carried up on high by an *eagle;* when he awakes, Virgil tells him that he was carried away by *Lucia*, — therefore

Lucia and the eagle are one! Shall we ever cut all the Gordian knots tied by hatred and fear? The light of Lucia's eyes, or Fiammetta, inspired the mind of her lover, and endowed him with resources of endless fictions, which, to the great amusement of Madonna, the general reader has always taken for poetical fancies. These fictions are too long and complicated for us to undertake the interpretation of more than one, and that the shortest among them, which is important as describing a pilgrimage, and as being the history of the sect whose aim was Rome. It shows us that the first emperor who leagued with this secret society was Frederic I., during the height of his contests with the popes. The author, to keep up the unity of the fiction, has connected it throughout with that emperor; but, by means of other allegorical agents, he has related the events which happened in succeeding ages, and especially the most memorable, viz. the change in the sectarian language. Dante, under the name of Blandizio (from blandishment), is described as the principal author of the change; and two other Florentines (probably meant for Petrarch and Boccaccio himself), are named as his co-operators in the design. The author, in his preamble, informs us that he wrote the romance one day when he found himself more than ever *attacked by death*, and *mortally offended* at the loss of a beloved friend.

EPITOME AND INTERPRETATION OF THE URBAN.

Frederic I. Emperor of Rome, was a great lover of the chase, and one day having entered a *wood*, he espied a large *wild* boar, which he instantly attacked sword in hand, and wounded. The shades of night* overtook him, and he found that he had *missed the right path;* and being somewhat alarmed, he called with a loud voice to his attendants, but none replied; after repeated and vain endeavours to make himself heard, he began to think on some other means of ensuring his personal safety; and while he was anxiously looking round in search of some place, where he might pass the night, out of the reach of the *wild beasts* of the forest, he saw *sparks of fire* rising in the air; and instantly plunging into the thickest of the wood,* after great labour he reached the spot where they had appeared. Here he saw a miserable dwelling, and knocking at the door he entered, and found that its only inhabitant was a young female, to whom he apologized for his intrusion, urging the necessity to which he was reduced by the *extreme darkness* of the night; after which he demanded why he found her there all alone. She answered that *death* had made sad havoc in her family; and that her mother had gone as a *servant to Rome*, to gain a livelihood for them. The Emperor was considerably moved at her tale, and feeling interested for her, he said: Only return my love, and I will *by secret ways* contrive to demand you of your mother in marriage—but you must *conceal* in your own heart the love we entertain for each other, until we can be *united*, and dwell together, *without suspicion*, in peace and happiness. Think of the great end in view, and you will not hesitate. Then drawing a valuable ring from his finger, he gave it to her,† bidding her keep it as a token of his love, sacred from other eyes, until their secret plighted faith could be publicly acknowledged; and having said this, he departed. When the mother returned, she was astonished at the great *change* which had taken place in her daughter's *counte-*

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* Symbol of the ignorance of the people.

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* "The Albigenses were obliged to hold their meetings in *woods*," (Millot): and they were reproached by the ferocious inquisitor Izarn, with preaching the doctrine in *woods*. Thus also the priests accused the Italian poets of burying themselves in woods. (See Bocc. Geneal. B. 14. ch. 11.) Here the wood seems quite allegorical, like that of Dante, and to represent *Italy*, a prey to the popes.

† A symbol of the secret treaty between the Emperor and the sect.

nance,* and questioned her as to the cause; but the daughter evaded giving a direct reply, because she believed in Frederic's false promises. At length, she was obliged to confess the whole affair to her mother, whose grief may be easily imagined; she was then a servant in the house of an innkeeper, whom she admitted to her confidence, and the good man kindly agreed to receive her daughter into his house,† where she soon afterwards gave birth to *Urban*. It so happened, that at the very same time, another son was born to Frederic, and named *Speculo*,‡ and scarcely had this double birth taken place, when the mother of the damsel, the Empress, and the wife of the innkeeper all expired.§ The two boys grew up: the one delicately nurtured by the Emperor, the other no less fondly reared by his mother and their kind friend, the innkeeper; and although their rank was so very different, by some chance they became extremely intimate,‖ and Urban, naturally beautiful and pleasing in his manners, soon acquired the habits of the court, and loved Speculo with a truly fraternal affection; but this not being agreeable either to his mother or to the innkeeper,¶ he ceased to visit the palace, and devoted himself to the service of the public. The innkeeper's love for him increased every day, and although he did not know the mystery connected with his birth, his sole delight was in gazing at him, and conversing with him. Thus matters went on until Urban and Speculo had reached their fourteenth year (the 14th century when the language was altered), when three Florentine merchants, *brothers*, arrived at the inn. The first, who was called Blandizio, no sooner saw Urban, than he perceived his astonishing likeness to Speculo, and feeling quite certain, that if they were dressed alike, it would be impossible to distinguish one from the other, he conceived an idea full of novelty and ingenuity. He drew his brothers aside and said to them: "Dearest brothers, the uncertainty consequent upon the life of a merchant obliges us to think incessantly on some new *artifice*, whereby to deceive the *simple* and unwary. To enable us to live without all this trouble, I have thought on a novel expedient." He then remarked to them the great resemblance between Urban and Speculo; and his conviction that if dressed alike they would be mistaken for one another. At this time, the great Soldan of Babylon, either from pride or avarice, had refused to send his customary tribute to Rome, and all the remonstrances of the Emperor had failed to bring him to his senses, but at the same time, he was rather frightened at the warlike preparations making against him, and was covertly seeking some means of reconciliation. Blandizio therefore proposed taking advantage of this state of affairs; persuading Urban to dress himself like Speculo, and go to Babylon under the pretence of treating for peace, but in reality for the purpose of getting the tribute out of the Soldan's hands. His brothers were rather startled at the boldness of the design; and at the danger of trusting so *great* and *terrible* an undertaking to the prudence of a mere *youth;* for they thought, on the one hand, on the difficulty he would have to encounter, while conversing so long in a *feigned language*, and on the other hand, they knew that a discovery would render their lives more wretched than ever. Blandizio's eloquence however overcame all their scruples, and the project was agreed on. Urban was informed of their plot, and gave a willing consent to go with them, not only to *Babylon*, but if it were necessary, to *Hell* itself. As a commencement of their undertaking, they went to the harbour of Genoa, and declared their intention of sailing to the westward, meaning all the while to steer in a contrary direction.* Urban was so delighted with his splendid apparel, that he could scarcely divest himself of the belief that he was in sober reality an undisputed lord.† While on board the ship, Blandizio recollected that the Soldan of Babylon had a daughter between thirteen and fourteen years of age, called Lucretia, who *looked like* a divinity rather than a mortal; and that the whole country spoke of her as a model of *industry*, *sense*, *valour* and *courtesy*.‡ Turning this over in his mind, he arranged into a regular form the train of falsehoods he was obliged to invent in order to cover his dangerous plot; and in due time they arrived in Babylon, where the Soldan was then holding his court, surrounded by his barons, and revelling in luxury and wealth. There Urban, who was never discovered, even by those who had seen Speculo at his father's court, was received with the greatest honour and joy, conducted to the Soldan's palace, and entertained like a prince. During the banquet, many vague and half formed suspicions came across the mind of the Babylonian, but the apparent candour and honesty of his guests soon stifled them, and as soon as it was ended, he was thus addressed by the deceitful Florentine: "High and mighty lord, I need not call to your remembrance the long disputes and wars between yourself and the Emperor. Speculo has induced his father to let him mediate between you; but he desires that any treaty of friendship and alliance which may now be entered into, will be kept a profound secret, for a little time; and as one token of peace and concord, he demands your only daughter in marriage for his son." The king answered: "I never could have dreamed that any thing so acceptable would be proposed to me; or that so mighty a lord would deign to ally himself with one so low as I am.* I am always ready to obey his commands, with the devotion due from a vassal; although I think my daughter so unworthy of Speculo, that she ought to be his servant instead of his wife.† And when I consider the high rank to which she is destined, I think that, were the whole of my territory assigned as her portion, it would not be too much for one who has a right to govern it as his own." Having thus answered, he next proposed to introduce his daughter to the supposed Speculo, and when he saw her approaching, he smiled and said: Well, Speculo, I think such *merchandise* would find a ready sale in Rome, where buyers are so plentiful.‡ Urban testified his sense of the lady's merit, and the nuptials were celebrated forthwith in the presence of the Soldan and his wife; after which, they presented him with a casket filled with precious gems, the marriage portion of their daughter. Blandizio beheld these treasures with a greedy eye, while Urban was occupied with gazing on the young lady so intently, that the Florentine began to tremble, lest he should break through the *feigned language*. The Soldan's wife also gave to her daughter rich cloths of gold, and dresses of every description, and made, besides, very valuable presents to all the others, presenting the captain of the vessel with a rich pavilion, splendidly woven and embroidered. When the time for departure arrived, she turned in sorrow to her child, saying: " O my beloved daughter, I am old, solitary and unhappy, and your departure will shorten the life which I had fondly hoped to spend and resign in your society." She then affectionately reminded her of the long journey she was about to take into a foreign land; and as preservatives against the ills which *Fortune* might have in store for her, she gave her two precious gems from the East, bidding her conceal them carefully in her white vest.* The daughter accordingly hid them, assuring her mother that, uncertain as was her *life*, wherever she might be, she would strive to obey her injunctions; and then taking a tender farewell of both her parents, she embarked on board the vessel, with her *old nurse*, the only person whom Blandizio would permit her to take away.† The sails were spread, and they proceeded on their voyage, with wind and weather both in their favour.‡ Urban's happiness was centered wholly in his wife, and sometimes he would exclaim: " O Lord, how highly was I favoured when this subtle design entered the mind of Blandizio." They soon came in sight of an uninhabited rock, called the " Dispersed Island," which was full of wild beasts,

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* The old mother is a figure of the original Italian sect; the daughter represents the modifications made in it by Frederic; and her son is a symbol of the sectarian language which owed its origin to their union.

† The innkeeper is a figure of the *public*; who received the doctrine of the sect.

‡ *Speculo* signifies the language adopted by the Emperor; the one jargon being, as it were, a mirror to the other; and thus the Emperor in his palace, and the sect in public, were in communication together.

§ The new secret language, professed by the sect, the Emperor, and the public, superseded the old; and therefore, this triple death may be reduced to one.

‖ This relates merely to the connection between the Emperor and the public, by means of the secret language.

¶ This alludes probably, to some advice given to the proselytes of the sect not to indulge in this perilous correspondence, for fear of discovery.

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* From Genoa, or Naples, which signifies the *New City*, this new sectarian course was to begin.

† This vain hope and belief was nourished for many ages.

‡ The Catholic doctrine. She is said to be in her fourteenth year, because in that century the mystic union of the erotic and sacred language took place; and her name Lucretia is derived from *lucre*, and signifies the *gain* which the Pope and his church drew from her.

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* Very different were the real sentiments of the Babylonish ruler: these are ascribed to him, only in order to degrade him by the comparison.

† What an insult is here offered to the Catholic faith!

‡ From the sale of this *Lucretia* he acquired his riches.

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* These two gems are figurative of the two precious keys, which were to be used in extreme cases. They were called *Eastern* gems, because the Paulicians introduced them from the East.

† This ancient nurse is a symbol of the Old Testament.

‡ We may here remark, that previously to the commencement of this story, *four* real ambassadors had used their best endeavours to bring about a peace between the Emperor and the Soldan, but ineffectually; and now *three* false ones have succeeded, because they employed the mediation of Urban, the illegitimate. After all that we have said about the mystic number *seven*, need we again repeat whom these four and three represent?

and especially of *lions*.* There they landed, and spreading the tent which had been given to the captain, they spent the day in cheerful recreations, and in listening to Lucretia, whileshe sang some plaintive canzonets. As soon as Urban and Lucretia went into the tent, Blandizio proposed to put them both to death, that they might possess themselves of the Babylonish treasures; but in this he was opposed by the master of the vessel, who advised that they should be left there to their fate. His counsels were taken, and Blandizio and his companions left them in the *imaginary*, and sailed towards the *figurative* country of the Lions, viz. *Paris;* while the forsaken pair perceived, too late, the artifices which had been practised on them; thus left alone, Urban confessed to Lucretia the whole history of the fraud in which he had borne a part, and received her forgiveness and assurances of affection; they then wandered for a long while over the island, and seeing no possibility of escaping, they re-entered the tent in despair, and cast themselves down, expecting *death* to put an end to their sufferings. At this juncture, a ship was driven on the rock by contrary winds; and the miserable couple were discovered by the crew lying in a complete state of exhaustion in the tent: Gerard, their captain, desired them, and the poor nurse also, to be carried on board his vessel, where, by dint of the most unwearied attentions, they were at length restored to consciousness. As soon as she found herself saved from *death*, Lucretia began to invent a long story, denying or suppressing every thing relating to their real history, and *weeping bitterly*. The captain then kindly took them to Naples,† and as soon as they were all landed in that city, Lucretia begged him to accept of the tent, as a token of their gratitude for all his kindness and *pious love* towards them, which he accordingly did. Urban and Lucretia then exchanged their splendid dresses for the *mean habits of pilgrims*, and in this guise slowly travelled towards *Rome* (the Italian Babylon.) On their arrival in the city, Urban went direct to the innkeeper's house, but was desired instantly to leave it: * his mother, on the contrary, flew to embrace him, and promised to find them a lodging forthwith; she accordingly applied to her neighbour, *a widow* †, with whom she was very intimate; and this lady being *rich* and *old*, took the pilgrims into her house, and supplied their every want. Still Urban was full of sad thoughts of the future, and passed a long and sleepless night ‡, deaf to all Lucretia's anticipations and assurances of love. As soon as the day dawned §, they arose, and with the *widow* and their mother took their way to the Capitol.‖ Lucretia took her two jewels in her hand, and there sold them to a merchant, who paid 70,000 ducats for them, of which sum she carried part away, leaving the rest as a deposit ¶; and the following day, she and Urban dressed themselves in splendid garments, bought a palace very near the Emperor's, and furnished it magnificently. All this while, Urban's mother tried in vain to find out who Lucretia really was.** None would tell her; but believing her an honourable and religious person, she paid her every proper attention.

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* This island is a figure of the dispersion of the sectarians, by the persecutions of the Lions of France.

† Naples, or the New City, is mentioned in several of these mystic tales, as the commencement of the new sectarian journey.

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* The reception which the unfortunate generally experience.

† This *Widow* is the *sect* founded by *Gerard*, viz. the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose proselytes called themselves the *Sons of the Widow*.

‡ While ignorance prevailed.

§ Symbol of the return of better times.

‖ The goal to which they all aspired.

¶ Viz. the half; the value of the other gem could not be estimated in those times, and never was afterwards.

** Had she known her better, she would have discovered her to be fiction and a profanation.

Urban, following his wife's advice, attached himself to the Emperor's court, and winning his way by the softness of his manners, he was very soon loved and valued by the Emperor, who beheld in him the image of his own son Speculo, who had *died* a few days before.[*] On her part, Lucretia had *spared no device* or skill, in the working of a cloth of silk and gold, which she had finished up with the most refined care; but while she was still employed on it, she heard with great alarm, that the Emperor was assembling a strong force against the Babylonian, and she dreaded the thought of being discovered, well knowing that her *life* would be rendered a burden to her. Still she hoped, that for Urban's sake, whom he loved, that monarch would show mercy to her, particularly as she was not guity towards *him*[†]. Consoling herself, therefore, as well as she could, she finished the work, and humbly presented it to the Emperor,[‡] who, delighted with the gift, and astonished at the wonderful skill displayed on it, was pleased to praise it as a most *masterly production.*

On hearing of the Emperor's preparations, every country sent ambassadors to Rome with supplies for his army; and among them came the *three Florentines*, as envoys from *Paris.*[§] They were instantly recognized by Lucretia, who determined to revenge herself on them; and for that purpose, she invited them to meet the Emperor at a sumptuous banquet * which she was preparing. Every thing succeeded to her heart's content. When the banquet was ended, the Emperor, charmed with her agreeable manners, inquired into the particulars of her former life; and she immediately entered into a full detail of every circumstance connected with her birth and marriage, and related all the deceitful and base conduct of the Florentines, whose confusion may be easily imagined. The Emperor was lost in astonishment. Urban's history was then demanded: and when he confessed himself the son of an inn-keeper, the reputed father was summoned to appear. He being questioned, declared himself totally unconnected with the youth, and informed the Emperor, that the secret of his birth rested with a lady not less beautiful than virtuous. The imperial curiosity demanded the presence of this lady; and on her appearance, she was pressed to unravel this entangled history; when, with many blushes, she commenced the recital of her own misfortunes; and when, having concluded her tale, she displayed the ring, the token of the broken promises of the huntsman, a flood of past recollections rushed to the heart of the Emperor; all was avowed; he embraced Urban and Lucretia as his children; and turning to his former love, he publicly declared her his spouse, and commanded that she should henceforth be known as the Empress Silvestra. On the after fate of the other characters of this tale, a few words will suffice.

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[*] Speculo expired the very instant which witnessed the union of his *perfect image* with Lucretia.

[†] She was guilty towards her father and mother, and not towards the Emperor.

[‡] This work, composed for and presented to the Emperor, is the real definition of Dante's poem; outwardly *sacred*, really *imperial.*

[§] The Florentines had remained in Paris, with their stolen treasure, and had purchased castles and villas, and vaults there; while the captain, who had led them to their prize, went into Catalonia, with some of Lucretia's jewels, and there ended his days.

Whoever reflects for a moment on the actions of Blandizio and Gerard, will be at no loss to identify them. The first, by secret arts, united the daughter of Babylon with the son of Rome; the other saved them from the dispersed island, and enabled them to set off on their pilgrimage to Rome. The first *concealed* his stolen treasures, the last put up to *public* sale his rich pavilion (as we read in the romance); the one is a figure of the *secret political spirit* of the sect; the other represents the *declared spirit* accommodated to the dogmas of religion; and hence we find that Gerard is set at liberty, while Blandizio is shut up in prison; and invisible will he remain in that prison, until some great spirit shall come, and show him and all his magical arts to the world, with more power, though not more desire than we can boast of, to explain those arts clearly.

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* This banquet corresponds with that of Dante, wherein the secret of his allegorical poem is explained to the intellectual reader.

There is a little difficulty in one part of this tale;—Frederic declares Silvestra to be his lawful wife; that is, in fact, to say that he declared the sect with whom he was united, the ruling religion of the state. And yet, immediately afterwards, he commands every one to lay down his arms, because he had entered into a close alliance with the Soldan. A little reflection on this subject will make us understand that this Soldan is no longer the Babylonian ruler, but the head of the new religion of which Silvestra is the emblem.

Doubtless, the author of Urban, in his attempt to express his own secret opinions and ideas, was guilty of many violations of historical truths; and we may discover, in many parts of the tale, a strange confusion of persons, names, places and facts. But then we must remember, that what seems most ridiculous and unpleasing too, *literally* taken, is very often of the deepest meaning, *allegorically*. And can there be a doubt remaining of the nature of this romance, after our interpretation has shown its perfect agreement with so many other fables of the same school, and especially after the declaration made by Fiammetta?

Much time has been occupied in our reflexions on the writings of Boccaccio, but not unprofitably; we were very anxious to prove that his Latin pastorals, his Italian verses, his Genealogy of the Gods, his Amorosa Visione, his Filocopo, Fiammetta, Ameto, Urbano and Decameron, were every one written with the same design in view. We trust to have done this; and we must conclude this chapter without noticing any more of the numerous mystic pilgrimages, which are so many repetitions of the same subject, in various disguises concealed. For instance, — *Les trois pélérinages* of Guillaume de Guilleville, a Cistercian monk, which appeared shortly after Dante's death; and the *Voyage d'outre-mer du Comte de Ponthieu*, which has many points of resemblance with the Filocopo, and relates the *triple pilgrimage* likewise. *Aucassin et Nicolette* is a tale of precisely the same nature. The two last-mentioned are published in the third volume of the collection of Legrand d'Aussy. In short, every country has had its pilgrims and pilgrimages; and these works in French, English, Italian and Spanish, are equally numerous: but, unfortunately, many of them are so completely enveloped in their secret and mystic garments, that to declare their real names, without having time to stop and divest them of their outward disguise, would only be to subject ourselves to the disbelief and ridicule of the vast majority of our readers.

ERRATA.

Page 41, line 2, *after* Angelus, *insert a comma.*
119 .. 9, from bottom, *for* Marnnis, *read* Manni's.
121 .. 19, *for* Elog. *read* Eloq.
153 .. 5, from bottom, *for* go *read* do.
161 .. 17, *omit* it.
163 .. 3, of note, *omit* he.
164 .. 18, *for* lovers *read* loves.
263 .. 3, *the quotation ends.*

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